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Risk Analysis
for 2021

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Throughout the report, references to Kosovo* are marked with an asterisk to indicate that this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Contents

List of acronyms used

BCP	border-crossing point
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EBCG	European Border and Coast Guard
EC	European Commission
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
EDF	European Union Document-Fraud
EDF-RAN	European Union Document-Fraud Risk Analysis Network
EIBM	European integrated border management
EMPACT	European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats
ETIAS	European Travel Information and Authorisation System
EU	European Union
EU+	27 EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland
Eurodac	European Dactyloscopy
Europol	EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (formerly European Police Office)
Eurostat	Statistical Office of the European Union
FRAN	Frontex Risk Analysis Network
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency (formerly European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union)
FTF	foreign terrorist fighter
IBC	Illegal border-crossing
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ID	identification document
IDP	internally displaced person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISIS/ISIL/Daesh	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JO	Joint Operation
MS	EU Member State
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OCG	organised crime group
PPE	personal protective equipment
RDC	Return Data Collection
SAC	Schengen-Associated Country
SAR	search and rescue
SBC	Schengen Borders Code
UK	The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council resolution
WCO	World Customs Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

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1. Foreword

In a complex world engulfed in a once-in-a-lifetime global crisis that has affected every aspect of our lives, reliable intelligence has become an invaluable commodity. This is precisely why I am pleased to present the *Risk Analysis for 2021*, which not only paints a clear picture of the migratory trends and related indicators, but also shows how the external borders have been affected by COVID-19.

2020 was already set to be the most challenging for Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. The previous year had concluded with the new European Border and Coast Guard Regulation coming into force, giving the Agency new tools as well as new responsibilities to become a fully-fledged and reliable partner for Member States at the

external borders. The new regulation also set Frontex on the path to becoming the EU's largest agency as a true law enforcement body with its own uniformed service – the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps.

Such massive changes coupled with unprecedented growth and very ambitious deadlines would represent an immense challenge for any organisation. For Frontex, this also means expansion and continued recruitment without compromising on the quality of the selection process, including application of EU staff regulations, and operational support to the Member States that must not be interrupted.

If these challenges by themselves were not enough, for over a year now

we all have had to cope with the disruptions and limitations caused by a global pandemic. Despite it all, today we have recruited more than 500 members of the standing corps, with half of them already at their posts at the borders and our headquarters – contributing to our mission to protect the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. Soon, more of the recruits will complete their training in Italy and Spain.

Another group of officers from national authorities who for the first time are seconded to Frontex activities as Category 2 of the standing corps, are also on board and are contributing their expertise and experience.

Amid COVID-19 Frontex not only maintained its key operations even as

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air travel came to a virtual halt a year ago, the Agency also launched not one, but two rapid border interventions at Greece's land and sea borders. This brought more officers and more technical equipment to support Greece in dealing with rising migratory pressure at its borders, which, of course, are also the external borders of the EU.

The pandemic tested us all, but also encouraged us to come up with creative solutions that have proven useful in the deployment of the standing corps. These included expanded online training for the recruits and members of the border and coast guard community, as well as the creation of the first logistics base in Greece that is used to store and distribute personal protection equipment and other supplies to officers on the ground.

COVID-19 and related national measures, as well as the reintroduction of internal border controls, had a significant effect on the migratory picture at the external borders. These phenomena also affected cross-border crime, and its perpetrators adapted to closed borders and more limited mobility.

Criminals also seized new opportunities, from smuggling counterfeit personal protective equipment to fake negative test certificates. This comprehensive document also discusses other border management challenges, such as the terrorist threat, detection of stolen vehicles and smuggling of firearms, drugs and cigarettes. Finally, we aim to provide an outlook for the short, medium and long term, as affected by COVID-19, as well as other factors that include demographic imbalances, inequalities, climate change, resource scarcity, urbanisation and new technologies.

Of course, another key factor in European Integrated Border Management will be the transformed Frontex, with increased resilience and new capacities, in large part thanks to the growing standing corps. Our Agency is now an operational partner supporting EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries with a wide range of services presented in the Frontex Catalogue of Services with the aim to bring extraordinary benefits for the functioning of the external borders to strengthen the free movement of hundreds of millions of Europeans, foreign residents and visitors within the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. I am confident that this Annual Risk Analysis for 2021 helps the Member States and Frontex to prepare for the next challenges at the external borders.

Fabrice Leggeri
Executive Director

2. Summary

Every aspect of European integrated border management in 2020 was **dominated by the COVID-19 crisis**. A leading indicator is the sharp fall in passenger flows at the EU's external borders, which decreased by more than two thirds compared with 2019, against a constantly increasing trend in previous years. Detections of **illegal border-crossing** decreased by a **much smaller fraction**, reiterating the necessity to remain vigilant.

2020 will also be remembered as the year when **internal border controls** were **reintroduced** across Europe – a stark reminder to EU citizens of the historic achievement that the Schengen area of free movement represents. Border and coast guard authorities faced a human resource shortage (caused by high numbers of personnel on sick leave or quarantined) in the context of a more complex operational environment. Although the number of passengers shrank, the complexity of procedures at the borders, including measures against the spread of the virus, increased. Refusals of entry on the basis of health grounds multiplied.

It can be reasonably expected that 2021 will be a year of transition from the current emergency to an uncertain new normal. In the **short term**, COVID-19 will continue to significantly **affect travel across the EU's external borders. Factors to be considered include:**

■ The emergence of more resilient, infectious coronavirus **variants** has **clouded the path to recovery with uncertainty**;

■ The **occurrence of false vaccination certificates** as travel enablers, the possibility of a rise in the **smuggling of genuine, counterfeit or deteriorated vaccines**, and that of **COVID-19-related medical supplies and/or personal protective equipment (PPE)**, may put additional pressure on border management authorities; and

■ **Geographic fault lines between the vaccine haves and have-nots** are likely to re-shape migratory routes and/or affect travellers' flows.

In the **medium term,** the new **Pact on Migration and Asylum** presented by the European Commission on 23 September 2020 provides a perspective for a more comprehensive policy for asylum and migration management. The introduction of key novelties, including but not limited to the Blueprint Network, as well as a new pre-entry screening mechanism, will contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of EIBM.

It is realistic to assess that the impact of migration, cross-border crime and terrorism against the backdrop of the consequences of the pandemic will continue to require comprehensive responses from all actors that have a role in European integrated border management: the border and coast guard community is a significant but not the sole player in this.

And in the **long-term perspective,** the implications of megatrends identified in the Agency's foresight work – such as demographic imbalances, resource scarcity and climate change – will continue to provide the broad background on which to build an ever more effective European response to the challenges for the EIBM.

The Agency assesses that:

■ The gradual lifting of internal border controls and the relaxation of preventative measures at the borders as the pandemic recedes may cause **organised crime groups (OCGs) to revert to *modi operandi* used in the pre-crisis period**;

■ The **reactivation of traditional air routes will most likely lead to increased migratory flows** as it will ease (long-distance) travel, reduce cost, and decrease uncertainty. Air

traffic trends will likely return to pre-pandemic levels at least in the next two years, although this will depend on the recovery of the air transport industry and the progress of vaccination programs;

■ The **smuggling of fake (COVID-19-related) medical products** may persist as long as there is demand for vaccines and medicines in global and European markets;

■ The **demand for smuggled goods** in the EU will likely remain high in the post-pandemic period;

■ Prolonged **economic downturns** in certain countries of origin and transit might act as a strong push factor for international migration; and

■ **Increasing social inequalities and asymmetrical economic recoveries** worldwide will likely **contribute to an increase in cross-border criminality** at the EU's external borders.

As stated previously, in 2020 COVID-19 has affected EIBM across the board.

With regard to **irregular migration**, the following are just four of the **COVID-19-related phenomena** that defined 2020:

■ The re-routing of migrants from the Western Mediterranean route to the Western African route;

■ New *modi operandi* to avoid detection and subsequent quarantine (detected clandestine entry attempts in proportion to overall cross-border passenger flows increased markedly);

■ Increased migration from certain countries in Northwest Africa resulting from economic contraction; and

■ Nationality-specific pull factors due to the ceasing of readmissions.

In spite of the pandemic countermeasures in the EU and beyond, and considering the scale of movement restrictions, it may be surprising that in 2020 illegal border-crossings decreased by a mere 12%

compared with 2019. The higher number of detections on the Central Mediterranean, Western Balkan and Western African routes should give us pause, as they suggest that **migratory pressure on the EU is persisting**. However, there was a decrease in the share of vulnerable groups. Women and children represented a smaller share of the overall migrant population arriving on EU shores in 2020.

Cross-border crime, too, was **shaken up**, as criminals had to adapt to varying degrees of border closures. Some goods smuggling activities, for example, shifted to sea routes. International criminals were also quick to seize new opportunities, from smuggling counterfeit PPE to falsifying negative test certificates. 'Traditional' smuggling of excise goods, such as tobacco and alcohol, also responded to the demand created by closed borders.

If 2020 has demonstrated anything, then it is this: serious situations affecting border control can occur at any time, suddenly and without any obvious warning signs. The current pandemic has once again shown how important preparation, contingency planning, cooperation and crisis management are for the EBCG.

While contingency planning is crucial, so is **early warning**. The pandemic has demonstrated that health threats must be assessed more thoroughly than in the past. So far no definition of 'health risk' has been commonly agreed at EU level. A better understanding of how health risks are reported nationally is necessary for the EBCG to prepare a joint pre-warning system of future health-related threats, in collaboration with the ECDC.

Return activities were profoundly affected by the pandemic. While slightly more return decisions were issued in 2020 compared with 2019, effective returns fell significantly: the total number of effective returns carried out decreased by more than 50% (against 2019 figures). Annex Table 12 shows important changes in EU MS/SAC reporting on this indicator. Discounting those, the fall in effective returns was still significant.

2020 also brought the issue of **fundamental rights** within the context of border management to the forefront of the debate at European and national levels. Border and coast guards must identify vulnerable persons and persons in need of international protection, in some cases save them from being exploited by traffickers or smugglers, provide them with relevant information on their respective rights, and refer them to the competent authority. Fast and efficient referrals to the relevant authorities ensure that the rights of vulnerable persons and the right to asylum are guaranteed in practice, as per Article 18 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

The deployment of the EBCG standing corps presents an opportunity to ensure access to international protection for those who need it, while upholding well-functioning external borders in line with the Schengen Borders Code.

Latest situation 2020

(2019) Reported cases	**2020**

(2 550) **2 286**	Detections of illegal border-crossing at BCPs
(5 228) **3 719**	Detections of fraudulent document users
(10 989) **8 942**	Detections of facilitators
(139 377) **66 514**	Returns (effective)
(141 846) **125 226**	Detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs
(212 487) **131 439**	Refusals of entry
(302 023) **316 140**	Returns (decisions)
(403 078) **370 174**	Detections of persons staying illegally

Source: FRAN data as of 15 February 2021

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3. Introduction

The Frontex Risk Analysis for 2021 reports on all aspects relevant for European Integrated Border Management. In tracing the described developments of 2020, readers will notice that not a single aspect was untouched by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions on movements, border closures and other far-reaching COVID-19 countermeasures impacted all categories of cross-border movements, be it tourism, business travel or irregular migration. One threat (that to public health) shaped all other threats as every associated chapter will attest to. Border management in the service of mitigating this threat in turn profoundly impacted migration management and return. Developments and threats to the security of the EU's external border and the Schengen area are analyzed in this report. The aim is to limit the challenges and threats for border management by risk analysis and to ensure the functioning of the Schengen area.

Frontex's operational activities aim at strengthening border security by supporting Member States in their implementation of EU measures for the management of external borders.

The coordination of operational activities contributes to a more efficient allocation of Member States' resources as well as the better protection of the European area of freedom, security and justice. In this context, this Risk Analysis concentrates on the scope of Frontex's operational activities and, in particular, on irregular migration at the external borders of the EU and Schengen Associated Countries.

Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 significantly enhanced Frontex's mandate to ensure the efficient implementation of European Integrated Border Management as a shared responsibility of the Union, the Agency and national authorities of the Member States. More recently, Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 further reinforced the Agency's mandate and increased its competences.

In order to cover all aspects of Integrated Border Management, this annual report has been structured as follows: (1) the situational picture for the European Border and Coast Guard as regards irregular migration in accordance with the concept of Integrated Border Management; followed by (2) a description of other border management challenges impacting the workload of border guards caused by passenger flows, terrorism and various forms of cross-border crime; and finally (3) an outlook.

4. Methodology

The Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM) guides the overall report and covers the entire scope of integrated border management.

A coherent and comprehensive analysis of the risks affecting security at the external borders requires, above all, the adoption of common indicators. The analysis needs to identify the risks that arise at the external borders themselves and those that arise in third countries.

This Risk Analysis for 2021 is based upon the monthly statistics exchanged among Member States within the framework of the Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN). For this, the key indicators collected through the FRAN (as well as EDF-RAN and RDC) were:

- detections of illegal border-crossings at green and blue borders and at BCPs;
- refusals of entry;
- detections of illegal stay;
- detections of facilitators;
- detections of fraudulent documents;
- return decisions;
- effective returns and passenger flow data (when available).

In particular for cross-border crime analysis, EUROSUR incident reports were considered. Concerning applications for international protection, in order to avoid double reporting, Frontex stopped collecting asylum data from EU MS/SAC in July 2019 and since then only works with data collected by EASO.

The data were categorised by border type (land, air or sea), and those on land borders were additionally grouped by border section with neighbouring third countries. Priority is given to the use of the data for management purposes and to rapidly sharing data among Member State border-control authorities.

Member States' data processed by Frontex are not treated as official statistics and thus may occasionally vary from those officially published by national authorities. Throughout 2020, some FRAN members made backdated changes to their 2019 statistics. These changes have been incorporated into this document, hence some data presented here may differ from those presented a year ago in the Risk Analysis for 2020.

Member States were not requested to answer specific questions in support of this analysis. Rather, bimonthly analytical reports and incident reports from Member States routinely collected within the FRAN, as well as other Member States' contributions submitted in 2020, were used, especially as regards the analysis of routes and *modi operandi*. Information derived from debriefing activities carried out within Joint Operations was also essential analytical material.

Open-source information was also exploited, especially in identifying the main 'push and pull factors' for irregular migration to the EU. These sources included reports issued by government agencies, international and non-governmental organisations, as well as mainstream news agencies and EU bodies.

External borders, a term often used in this report, refer to the borders between Member States and third countries. The borders between the Schengen Associated Countries (Norway, Iceland, and Switzerland) and third countries are also considered as external borders. By contrast, the borders between the Schengen Associated Countries and Schengen Member States are considered as internal borders. Statistics on detections of facilitators and illegal stay and asylum are also reported at the land borders between Schengen Member States and Member States that have either not yet joined the Schengen area in full (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Romania) or have opted to stay out of it (Ireland). Thus, total figures for Member States and Schengen Associated Countries as a whole can be presented.

It was not possible to make the distinction for air and sea borders because Member States do not habitually differentiate between extra-EU and intra-EU air and sea connections, but tend to aggregate data for all arrivals per airport/seaport. Consistent with other law-enforcement indicators, variations in administrative data related to border control depend on several factors. In this case, the number of detections of illegal border-crossings and refusals of entry are both functions of the amount of effort spent, respectively, on detecting migrants and the actual flow of irregular migrants to the EU. For example, increased detections of illegal border-crossing might be due to a real increase in the flow of irregular migrants, or may be due to more resources made available to detect them. In exceptional cases, increased resources may lead to a rise in reported detections while effectively masking an actual decrease in the migratory flow, resulting from the deterrent effect of those increased resources.

5. Migratory Flow

Detections of illegal border-crossing at the EU's external borders, 2020

125 226
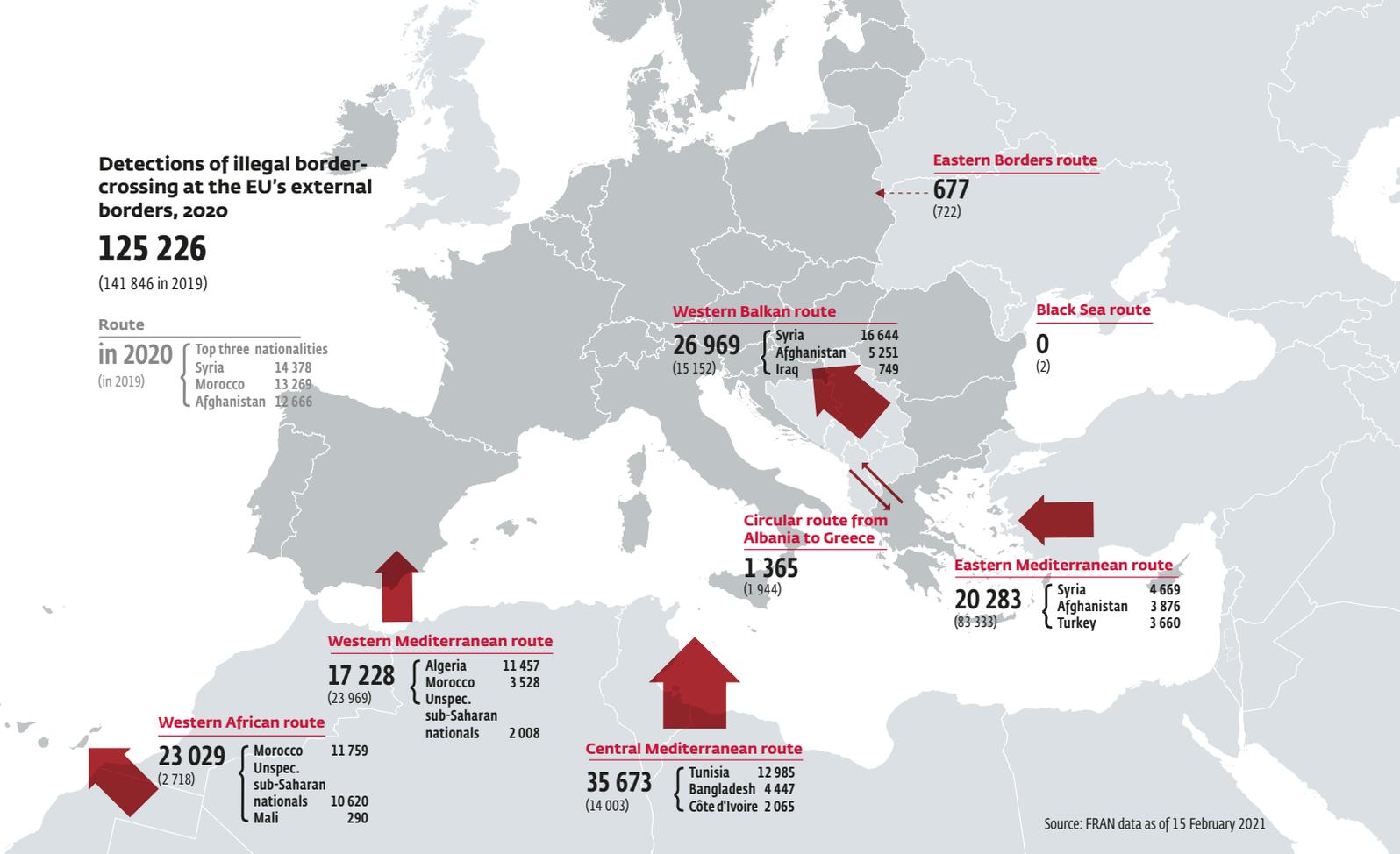
(141 846 in 2019)

Route
in 2020
(in 2019)

Top three nationalities
Syria   14 378
Morocco   13 269
Afghanistan 12 666

Eastern Borders route
677
(722)

Western Balkan route
26 969
(15 152)

Syria   16 644
Afghanistan 5 251
Iraq   749

Black Sea route
0
(2)

Circular route from Albania to Greece
1 365
(1 944)

Eastern Mediterranean route
20 283
(83 333)

Syria   4 669
Afghanistan 3 876
Turkey   3 660

Western Mediterranean route
17 228
(23 969)

Algeria   11 457
Morocco   3 528
Unspec. sub-Saharan
nationals   2 008

Western African route
23 029
(2 718)

Morocco   11 759
Unspec. sub-Saharan
nationals   10 620
Mali   290

Central Mediterranean route
35 673
(14 003)

Tunisia   12 985
Bangladesh   4 447
Côte d'Ivoire   2 065

Source: FRAN data as of 15 February 2021

5.1 Situational Overview

In 2020, just over 125 000 detections of illegal border-crossings (IBC) were recorded along the EU's external borders, according to EU MS/SAC data. This represents a 12% decrease on the number of detections recorded in 2019. It is the lowest recorded number of IBCs since 2013.

The decrease in 2020 primarily resulted from the drastic drop in arrivals due to the impact of COVID-19-related movement restrictions, which were imposed from March onwards. Linked to this and part and parcel of the decrease in the 2020 total was the prolonged reduction in detections on the Eastern Mediterranean route. Given the strongly increasing pressure before the onset of the pandemic and the higher number of detections on the Central Mediterranean, Western Balkan and Western African routes, the relative decrease compared with 2019 could arguably have been an increase but for COVID-19.

2020 saw a decrease in the share of **vulnerable groups** in migration flows entering EU MS/SAC. As most female migrants travel to EU MS/SAC on the Eastern Mediterranean route, the large drop in arrivals on this route contributed significantly to the overall fall in female arrivals from 23% in 2019 to around 8% in 2020. Likewise, most minors travel on the Eastern Mediterranean route – often as part of family units – and their overall decreased share was therefore equally a consequence of the fall in arrivals on the Eastern Mediterranean route. While some of the data on arrivals does not distinguish between age, the number of reported minors fell from around 23% in 2019 to around 11% in 2020 (preliminary data). On the other hand, the proportion of male migrants arriving in EU MS/SAC in 2020 was significantly higher than in 2019.

The fall in arrivals on the Eastern Mediterranean route was also behind the marked decrease in migrant arrivals from Southern Asia and the Middle East for the overall external borders. North African arrivals on the other hand increased in 2020 to their highest level since 2011. The largest contribution to this increase was made by Tunisians. Algerians, too, arrived in higher numbers, mostly taking the Western Mediterranean route, but their numbers also increased on the Central Mediterranean route. There were also more Moroccans, but while their numbers decreased on the Western Mediterranean route, their arrivals multiplied on the Western African route.

Rapid Border Intervention Evros 2020, © Frontex, 2020

On the **Eastern Mediterranean route**, 2020 began with strong pressure. Corresponding to this, two Frontex rapid border interventions assisted Greek border management until the fall of 2020. The COVID-19 containment measures in both Greece and Turkey then substantially reduced migrant arrivals, but the pressure gradually began rising again after April, although it stayed relatively low compared to previous years.

In the Eastern Aegean, movement restrictions on account of the pandemic reduced flows to almost zero landings on the Greek hotspot islands. Thereafter arrivals increased but at historically low levels: in the second half of the year fewer migrants arrived than in a single month at the beginning of the year. Afghans and Syrians were again the most reported nationalities by some distance. Together they accounted for well over half of all arrivals.

In Cyprus, too, detections after the 'COVID-shock' did not return to comparable levels seen in 2019.

After the first quarter of 2020 started with high migratory pressure at the external borders to the **Western Balkans,** this pressure quickly subsided due to COVID-19 countermeasures. As migrants in the Western Balkans were confined to a large extent to migrant camps, these countermeasures more strongly restricted the movements of the overall migrant population here than can be said for other regions.

After April the number of migrants reaching the neighbouring northern EU MS increased again, coinciding with restored mobility as COVID-19 restrictions were eased. Whereas Syrians represented a large share, migrant arrivals from all the Northwest African countries also increased markedly.

While migrants already in the Western Balkans region were likely the main contributors to the rising number of attempts on the region's northern borders, there were also new arrivals, as reflected by the significant pressure on entry to the region from the south. As such, non-regional migration in the Western Balkans in 2020 continued to be strongly connected to the Eastern Mediterranean migrant flow. The most important development in the routing through the region in 2020 was the increased routing of migrants northwards via Albania to Serbia via Kosovo[1] starting early 2020.

[1] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo* declaration of independence.

In this region, too, migrants sought to avoid detection and quarantine. At the borders of Croatia, Hungary and Romania with Serbia, around 1 600 clandestine entry attempts were recorded, a decrease in absolute numbers compared with 2019 yet a strong increase compared with the much-reduced passenger flow. Indeed, considering the absolute numbers, in the second half of 2020 (when cross-border traffic recovered) detections of clandestine entry attempts increased. Widely reported in the media were the use of several tunnels for the smuggling of migrants at the Serbian border.

At the Croatian border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, clandestine entry detections multiplied in the second half of the year (compared again to the second half of 2019). Whereas at the borders with Serbia most clandestine entry attempts were attributed to Afghans, at the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, the reported nationalities were more diverse. At both border sections, migrants tended to hide in or under lorries.
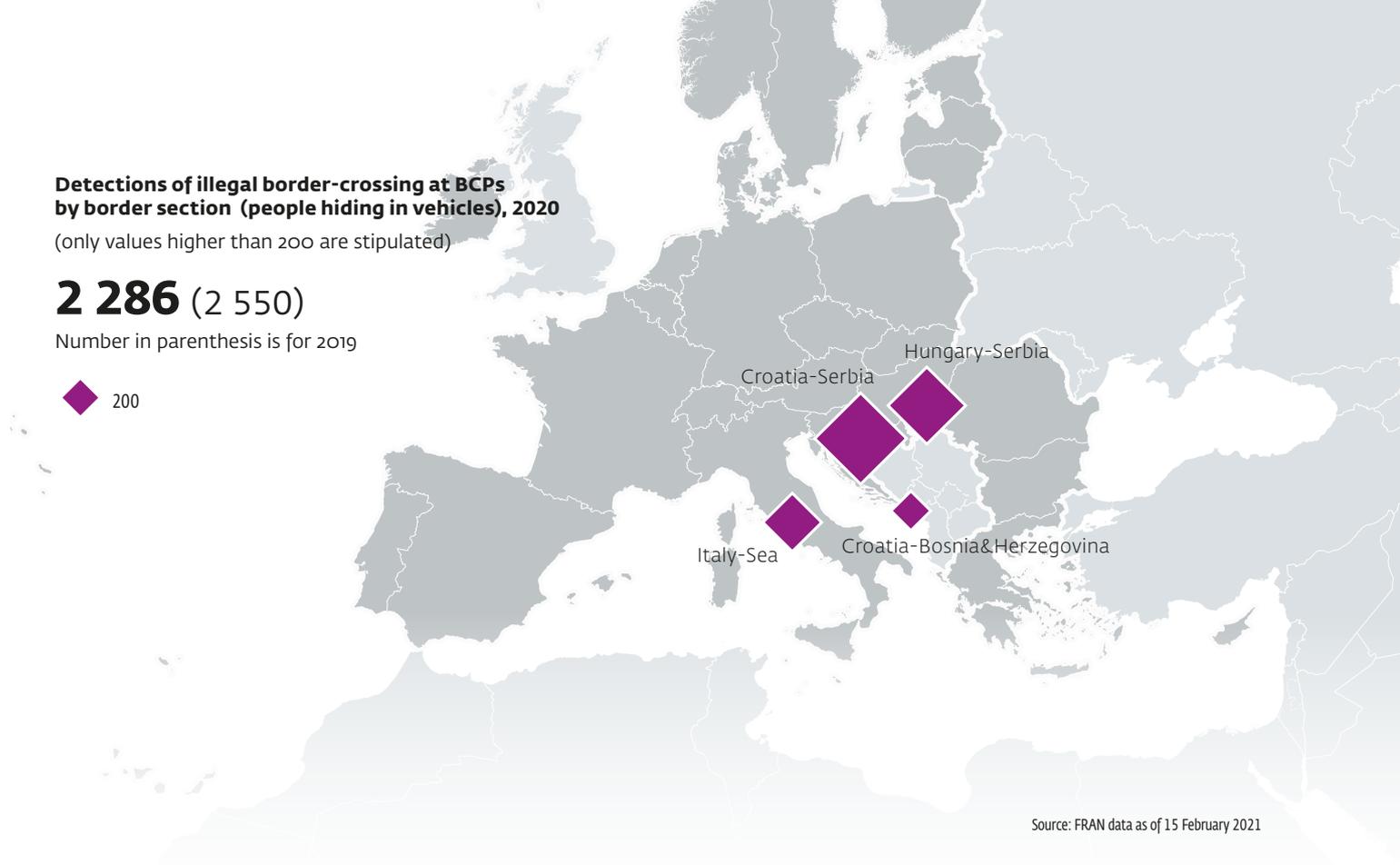
Detections of illegal border-crossing at BCPs by border section (people hiding in vehicles), 2020

(only values higher than 200 are stipulated)

2 286 (2 550)

Number in parenthesis is for 2019

◆ 200

Hungary-Serbia

Croatia-Serbia

Italy-Sea

Croatia-Bosnia&Herzegovina

After the pandemic took hold, detections in the **Central Mediterranean** fell steeply to 375 in March. The pressure rose significantly in the summer, making the Central Mediterranean route the most used, with around 35 700 IBCs (a 155% increase on 2019).

While departures from Libya, Algeria and Turkey all contributed to the increase, the highest relative increase in arrivals emanated from Tunisia, with around 14 700 IBCs (87% Tunisians making this the most detected nationality on this corridor). Other than Tunisians themselves, more Ivorians and Guineans also departed from Tunisia. From Libya, Bangladeshi, Sudanese, Moroccan, Somali and Eritrean migrants were the most numerous.

Simultaneous departures and the use of mother boats were common *modi operandi* on the corridor from Tunisia. The use of speedboats was reported to smuggle migrants on the Tunisian corridor, too.

Smuggling networks in Libya had to adapt their *modi operandi*, organising departures in better quality and less overcrowded vessels aiming to sail longer distances due to the enduring presence of maritime assets off the Libyan coast.

According to the UNHCR, the Libyan Coast Guard reportedly rescued over 11 000 migrants at sea in 2020, representing an increase of about a quarter compared to 2019.

Notably, although there were no arrivals registered until June on this corridor towards the Central Mediterranean, the number of arrivals from Turkey increased in 2020 to roughly 4 200 migrants, which is more than double the figure recorded in 2019 (almost 2 000 migrants). This is a continuing trend but one which was accentuated by the COVID-19 situation in 2020. Smuggling networks in Turkey reverted to their well-established *modus operandi* on this corridor, i.e. facilitating migrant crossings aboard sailing vessels or motor yachts. In some cases large fishing vessels were used to smuggle migrants.

After April 2020, when coordinated patrolling efforts in Morocco and COVID-19 countermeasures throughout Northwest Africa brought detected illegal border-crossings on the **Western Mediterranean route** down to 168, detections started rising again during the summer. By the end of 2020, over 17 200 migrants had been detected, a decrease of 28% on 2019.

Departures from Algeria occurred in significant numbers much earlier in the year than in previous years and almost tripled compared to 2019. In addition, almost 5 000 Algerian nationals departed from Morocco, more than twice the number in 2019. On the other hand arrivals from Morocco on this route fell.

On the Western Mediterranean route a variety of means were used by smuggling networks in 2020. On the Atlantic corridor the vast majority of detected migrant boats were wooden fishing vessels, generally skippered by a smuggler. In the Strait of Gibraltar, smaller craft such as toy boats, kayaks and jet skis were primarily used in the crossing. Occasionally, the crossings were supported by 'mother boats' (larger vessels that launch smaller boats such as toy boats, typically from international waters). On the corridor in the Alboran Sea, rubber or fiberglass boats, with low power engines, were mostly used in the crossing. On the corridor from Algeria, smuggling networks chiefly facilitated crossings aboard rubber or fiberglass boats with medium power engines, however towards the end of 2020 crossings aboard 'taxi boats' (fast boats that directly drop migrants off at the coastline) significantly increased. These crossings are more expensive and utilise high-speed and quality vessels, whose main purpose is to avoid detection and interception.

In 2020, COVID-19 movement restrictions in Morocco, among other factors,

Refusals of entry per border type, 2020

(only values higher than 1000 are stipulated)

102 448 (145 494)
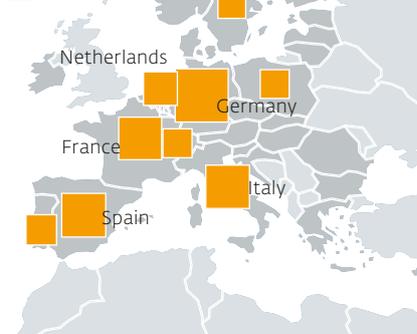Number in parenthesis is for 2019

Land

5000

Lithuania
Poland
Romania
Hungary
Croatia

26 208 (62 859)
Number in parenthesis is for 2019

Air

1000

Netherlands
Germany
France
Italy
Spain

2 782 (4 129)
Number in parenthesis is for 2019

Sea

1000

Italy

Trend of the total

	Land	Air	Sea
2019	145 494	62 859	4 129
2020	102 448	26 208	2 782

diverted flows onto the **Western African route**. Due to COVID-19 countermeasures in Northwest African countries, Sub-Saharan migrants assessed the chances of success of reaching the EU via the Western Mediterranean route as low and chose the Western African route as an alternative, which was re-activated as a result. Human smugglers have adapted to the demand and set up appropriate logistics for the smuggling to the Canary Islands. As a result, more and more migrants – also from the northern African countries – chose this route, which, however, is longer and more dangerous compared to the Western Mediterranean route. The number of arrivals on this route was around 23 000 in 2020 – over eight times the number in 2019. Arrivals increased exponentially in the last third of the year, also due to the use of large fishing vessels ('cayucos') with large passenger capacities (able to carry up to 200 migrants). Overall, roughly three quarters of all migrants in 2020 on this route departed from Morocco and the Western Sahara region, with the rest mostly departing from Senegal and very few from Mauritania. Up until August, the migrants who were targeting the Canary Islands were predominantly sub-Saharan migrants. In September a sharp increase in Moroccan nationals

was detected primarily departing from the Western Sahara region. Of all apprehensions on the Canary Islands in 2020, it is estimated that roughly half were Moroccan and the other half sub-Saharan.

On Europe's **Eastern land borders**, the overall number of illegal border-crossings decreased by 6% in 2020. There were small absolute increases in arrivals from Belarus and Moldova, but at low levels. In either case the additional detections did not involve nationals of the corresponding countries. The number of reported clandestine entry attempts was negligible. Notably, the political instability in Belarus had no significant impact on the EU's external borders.

In 2020 again a large share of refusals was issued to migrants at the Eastern land borders. In terms of refusals, two opposing trends occurred: on the one hand the share of passengers refused entry based on standard categories decreased significantly (on account of the drastic decrease in passenger flows due to movement restrictions caused by the pandemic), while on the other hand a larger share of passengers were refused entry on health grounds. At the land borders with Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova the number of refusals decreased from around 114 000 to roughly 74 000.

At the same time, refusals in category I (refusals based on a passenger constituting a threat to public policy, internal security, public health or the international relations of one or more Member States of the European Union) at these border sections increased from approximately 2 900 in 2019 to 12 000 in 2020. At the external borders, refusals in category I, which crucially includes refusals based on health threats, increased sixfold to almost 25 000 cases. In other categories, fewer refusals were issued as a function of the reduced passenger flow.

The number of migrants attempting to cross to or succeeding in reaching the UK across the **English Channel** significantly increased in 2020. Simultaneous departures took place at high speed to increase the likelihood of avoiding interception. According to Europol, the main *modus operandi* involved the use of small boats (Rigid Inflatable Boats or Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats) from the EU to the UK in 2020.[2]

On the **circular route to Greece**, detections again decreased. Virtually all (97%) of detected illegal border-crossings were by Albanian nationals.

2   Europol, European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (EU SOCTA) 2021.

© Frontex, 2019 – Kenneth Rosenqvsts

5.2 Facilitation of Irregular Migration

Member States in 2020 reported 8 942 detected people smugglers to Frontex. Around half of them were reported at the external border and the other half inland. The decrease of 19% compared with the 2019 total is almost exclusively a result of fewer reported detections at the external border and is linked to the reduced migratory flow as previously described.

Importantly, in 2020 the COVID-19 crisis meant that the demand for undetected smuggling into the EU rose as the prospect of avoiding quarantine in reception facilities was coveted. In this regard, Frontex debriefings suggest that smugglers demanded and achieved higher prices as a result.

According to Europol, migrant smuggling is and will remain a key activity for criminal networks, sustained by continued demand for facilitation services.[1]

Criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling are characterised by agility and responsiveness to changes

in their environment. The routes and *modi operandi* used by smugglers to facilitate migrants to and within the EU/SACs are flexible and shift depending on circumstances such as weather conditions, availability of transport logistics and the presence of risks such as increased law enforcement activity or travel restrictions. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that global crises do not in the long run significantly disrupt migration flows and do not diminish the demand for smuggling services to enter, transit or reside in the EU MS/SAC. After an initial slow-down during the first lockdown in March and April 2020, migrant smuggling activities quickly resumed. To compensate for potential economic losses, smuggling networks were forced to seek alternatives in routes, mode of transportation, and size of smuggled groups.[2]

The resourcefulness of criminal networks capitalising on irregular migrants' willingness to reach their preferred destination, paying high fees and taking significant risks, has been validated by some examples in 2020. Facilitation by air usually entails high prices including supply of fraudulent documents, such as identity documents, short-stay Schengen visas or national long-stay visas, either counterfeited or fraudulently obtained.

Migrant smuggling is the process of facilitating the unlawful entry, transit or residence of an individual in a country with or without obtaining financial or other benefits. Migrant smuggling entails the facilitation of illegal entry to the EU and Schengen-associated countries (SAC) and of secondary movements within the EU MS/SAC. It can also involve facilitating the fraudulent acquisition of a residence status in the EU MS/SAC. Migrant smuggling may entail land, sea or air transportation and often involves the use of fraudulent documents including identity documents or fraudulent visas.

[1] Europol, European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (EU SOCTA) 2021, accessible at https://www.europol.europa.eu/socta-report

[2] Europol 2020, How COVID-19-related crime infected Europe during 2020 [Report, 12 November 2020], accessible at https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-documents/how-covid-19-related-crime-infected-europe-during-2020

© Frontex, 2020

In 2020, facilitation by air routes making use of private charter flights has been detected occasionally.[3]

The heads of smuggling networks have solid managerial skills and are able to orchestrate the criminal business from a distance, while mostly exposing low-level criminals involved in transport and logistics to law enforcement detection. Experts in document forging and in legislation are often involved in a crime-as-a-service type of cooperation. Highly organised smuggling networks also have connections or internal capabilities to exploit irregular migrants after they have arrived at their destination, through a debt bondage, highlighting the close link between migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings.[4]

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3 Europol, European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (EU SOCTA) 2021, accessible at https://www.europol.europa.eu/socta-report; Infomigrants.net 2020, Iraqi family trafficked to Munich with private jet [Published on 14 October 2020], accessible at https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/27918/iraqi-family-trafficked-to-munich-with-private-jet.

4 Europol SOCTA, ibid.

Detections of people smugglers ('facilitators') reported at the external border by place of detection
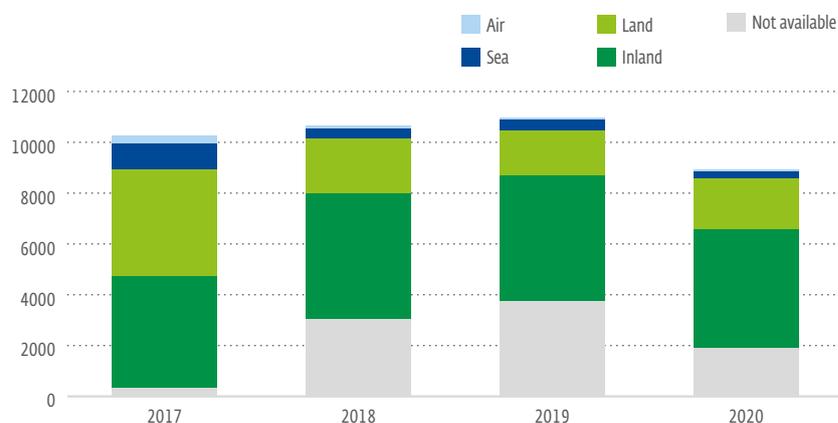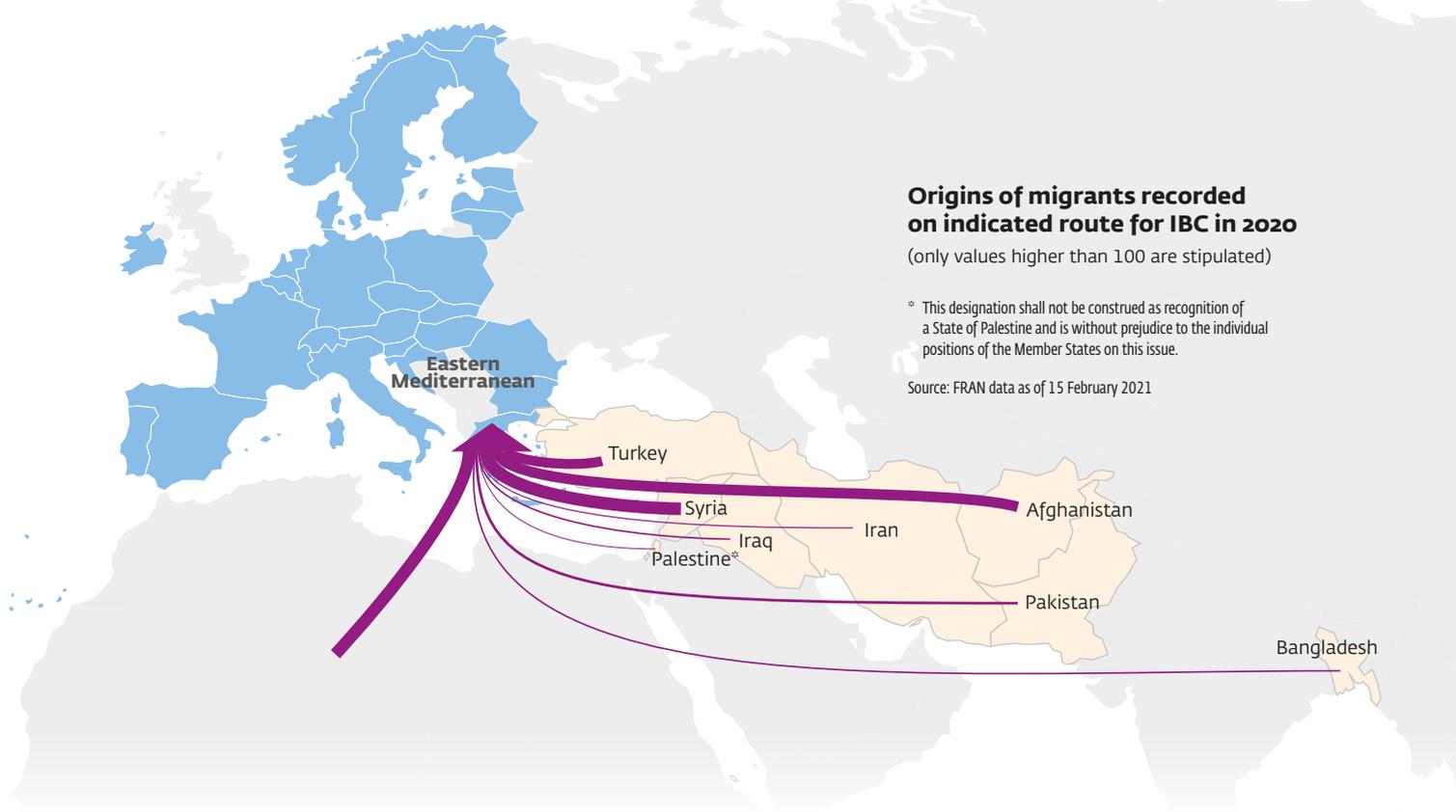

Source: FRAN data as of 15 February 2021

Migrant smuggling criminal networks treat irregular migrants as commodities and increasingly endanger their lives and physical integrity, aiming at maximising profits and reducing time and operational costs. The practice of using unseaworthy vessels or concealment in small confined spaces for prolonged periods puts irregular migrants' lives at risk and every year, many irregular migrants perish during facilitation attempts to and within the EU and the Schengen area. In addition to reckless *modi operandi*, migrant smugglers frequently employ violence or the threat of violence against migrants, often to ensure their compliance or force them to pay the smuggling fees. They also employ violence against law enforcement officers when avoiding apprehension and occasionally against other smugglers active in the same area.[5]

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5 Europol SOCTA, ibid.

Origins of migrants recorded on indicated route for IBC in 2020

(only values higher than 100 are stipulated)

* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

Source: FRAN data as of 15 February 2021

5.3 Third Country Overview

Regions particularly impacting the Eastern Mediterranean route, the Western Balkans and to a certain extent the Eastern European land borders

Migratory pressure on the Eastern Mediterranean route, the Western Balkans and to a certain extent the Eastern European land borders remains a function of developments in the main origin, host and transit countries in the Middle East, central and south Asia, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Overall, 2020 was an atypical year in which global slowdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, lower oil demand and prices, and even economic sanctions exerted downward pressure on the economies of many countries. The World Bank estimates that the pandemic pushed an additional 88 to 115 million people worldwide into extreme poverty, with the total rising to as many as 150 million in 2021, depending on the severity of the economic contraction. This will probably affect global migration for years to come.

In 2020, these economic pressures added to the continued instability and insecurity in key regions of origin of migrants, likely pushing many to reconsider their future livelihood options and search for security and protection.

However, the travel restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic appear to have limited the movement options of would-be migrants. It also appears that there have been repatriations of foreign workers from traditional host countries, often facilitated by governments in countries of origin in a context where many lost their jobs in foreign host countries. E.g. over 200 000 Bangladeshi nationals had reportedly returned from the Gulf Cooperation Council states by March 2020. At the same time, new departures, legal or illegal, were likely hindered by international travel restrictions and uncertainties related to the pandemic, keeping migratory movements somewhat in check.

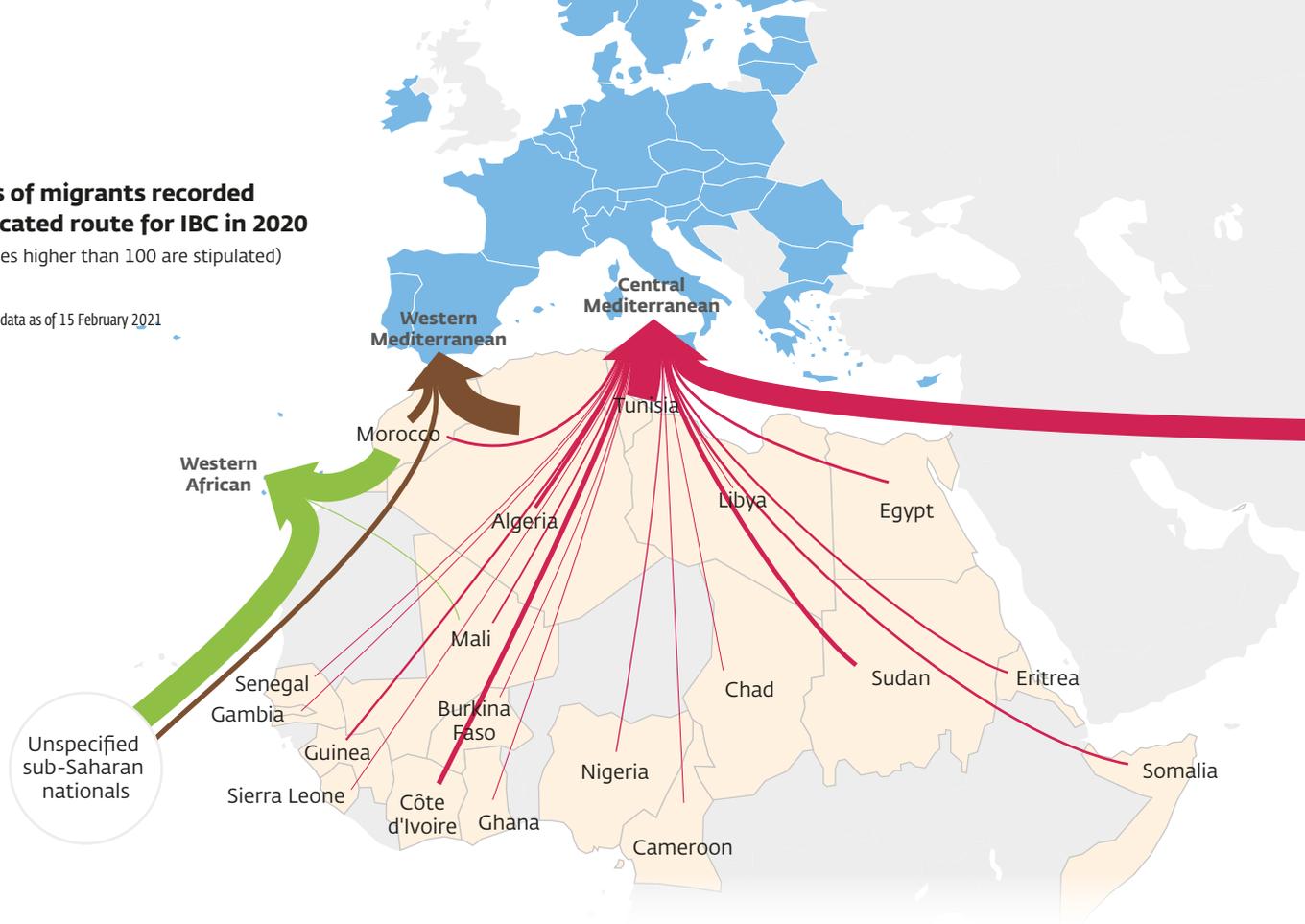For example, at the height of the COVID-19 travel restrictions, migratory pressure clearly decreased in areas where Frontex data collection allowed clear measurements. In this sense, while migrants already en-route to or present in neighbouring host countries continued to maintain a certain level of pressure on key border sections in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Balkans, others from more distant locations likely encountered greater difficulties in travelling to these regions. This, however, does not exclude a delayed reflection of the abovementioned push factors through increased migration to these regions in the coming months and years.

The impact of vaccinations, which promise to end the pandemic, will be key to reopenings here, too, and may route these onward movements via those transit countries with successful vaccination strategies.

Origins of migrants recorded on indicated route for IBC in 2020
(only values higher than 100 are stipulated)

Source: FRAN data as of 15 February 2021

Western Mediterranean

Central Mediterranean

Western African

Morocco

Tunisia

Algeria

Libya

Egypt

Mali

Chad

Sudan

Eritrea

Senegal

Burkina Faso

Guinea

Nigeria

Somalia

Sierra Leone

Côte d'Ivoire

Ghana

Cameroon

Gambia

Unspecified sub-Saharan nationals

Regions particularly impacting the Central and Western Mediterranean, and Western African routes

Migratory pressure on the Central and Western Mediterranean, and Western African routes remains a function of the developments and migration management efforts in the main origin, host and last departure countries in West and North Africa and the Horn of Africa.

Economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has badly affected the African continent. The Economist Intelligence Unit projected that regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would contract sharply, with almost all countries facing recession in 2020 and millions falling into poverty. Previously fast-growing sectors, including consumer goods and service industries, have suffered unexpected losses. Many more people are expected to fall into poverty than escape it for the first time in decades, which is a clear warning. The World Bank projects that economic activity in all regions of Africa will have declined. Experts expect the return to growth will be swift when

it happens, but recovery will be subdued in 2021, which will do little to ease the financial pressures on African households, businesses and governments.

Economic growth was hit by a combination of the domestic and international policy measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Oil exporters experienced reduced demand for hydrocarbon products and thus reduced revenue. Similarly, major mining countries will suffer from soft demand in major export markets, low energy commodities' prices and delayed investment plans by international mining companies.

As regards population growth in Africa, 1.1 billion people live in the sub-Saharan countries, a region growing by roughly 2.7% each year – the fastest growing region in the world. The average age of the population is relatively low. In 2019, 42% of sub-Saharan people belonged to the 0–14 age group. If the growth rate remains at the same level, the population of the sub-Saharan countries will double by 2050 and half of them will be below the age of 25.[1]

1   World Bank

Security issues also affect vast regions of Africa. A continued rise in insurgencies and spill-overs into previously unaffected regions of West Africa continued to be observed in 2020.

Methodological Note

Regions of origin are considered based on their evaluated potential as a region of origin and/or of transit for illegal immigration and their geographic proximity to the EU. The top migrant nationalities detected at the EU external borders either originate from or transit through these regions. Factors such as the availability of legal and illegal travel options to and from these regions, institutional efforts to manage migration, the socio-economic and political stability are among the key elements considered when selecting and assessing the most relevant regions.

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5.4 Fraudulent Documents

Overall situation

In 2020, the overall use of fraudulent documents as reported within the European Union Document Fraud Risk Analysis Network (EDF-RAN) decreased by nearly 50% in relation to 2019. EU MS/SAC reported over 16 000 fraudulent document users in 2020, which represents a record low since official EDF data collection from all EU MS/SAC began in 2013. This is linked to the pandemic-related drop in passenger flow. Another aspect partly influencing the overall lower number of document fraud cases detected and reported in 2020 concerned Brexit and the suspension of data collection from the UK.

Situation at the EU's external borders

Nearly 7 000 document fraud users were reported at the EU's external borders in 2020, which is similar to figures in 2019. However, Brexit means detections towards the UK that were previously categorised as intra-EU/Schengen secondary

movements are now reported as detections on exit to a third country at the external borders. Therefore, if detections towards the UK were excluded, the total number of detected users of fraudulent documents in 2020 would be around one third lower.

When taking into account different border types, in particular air and land borders, the situation with detected fraudulent documents varied greatly. While restrictions at the EU's external borders reduced air traffic by nearly 60% and thus lowered the number of document fraud users detected at the air borders, land border document fraud detections on the other hand increased despite low passenger flows. The increase in document fraud detections at the external EU land borders was caused by an increase in the number of fraudulent supporting documents, which were presented by migrants wishing to prove the necessity for crossing the borders during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those documents were often reported from the Polish-Ukrainian land border section in the hands of Ukrainian and also

Moldovan nationals. One newer *modus operandi* linked to illegal crossings of the EU's Eastern external land borders was observed in the case of Russians of Chechen origin who were often detected using counterfeit residence permits.

Ukrainian, Albanian and Turkish nationals ranked top at the EU's external borders

Ukrainian nationals (1 521) became the most commonly detected nationality of suspects of document fraud at the EU's external borders, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions at the borders which required possession of additional supporting documents proving the necessity for the border crossing. This led many Ukrainian nationals to use fraudulent supporting documents.

Albanian nationals (1 272) were the second most commonly detected nationality at the EU's external borders. The vast majority of them were detected on routes towards the UK. As in previous years, they mostly used counterfeit ID cards.

Persons using fraudulent documents on entry from third countries per border type
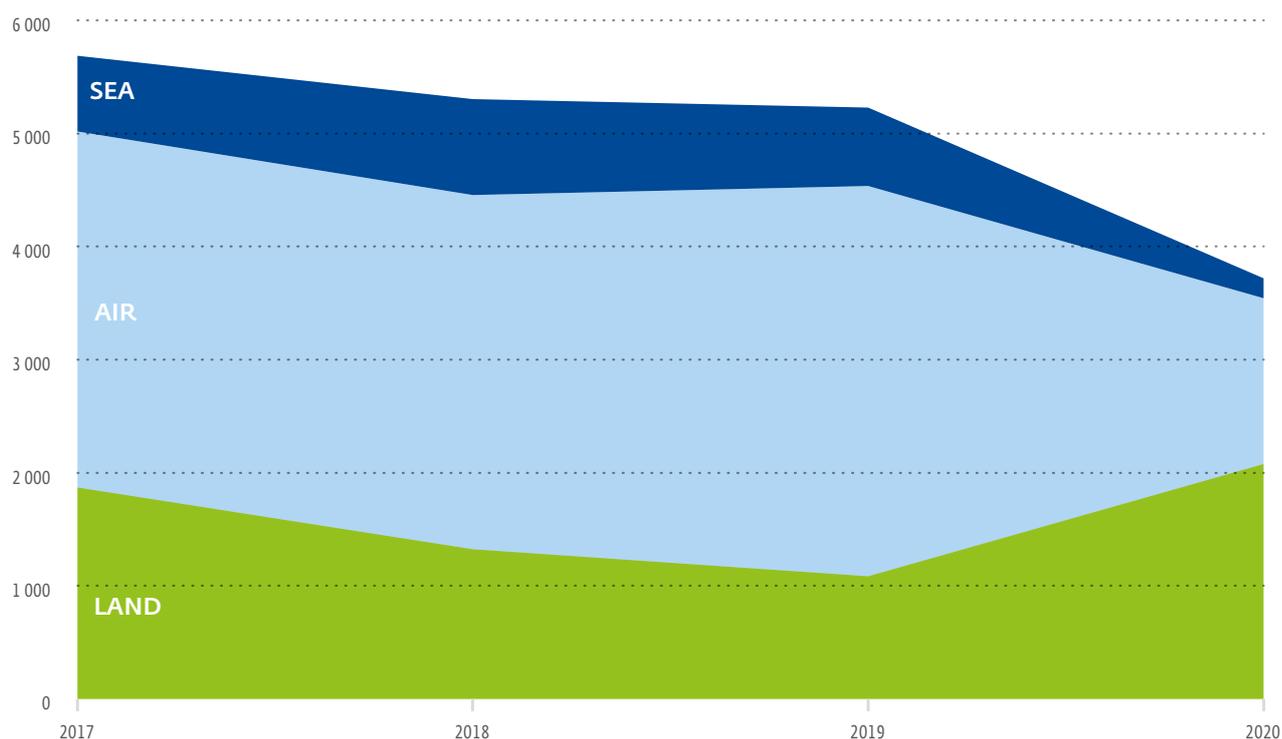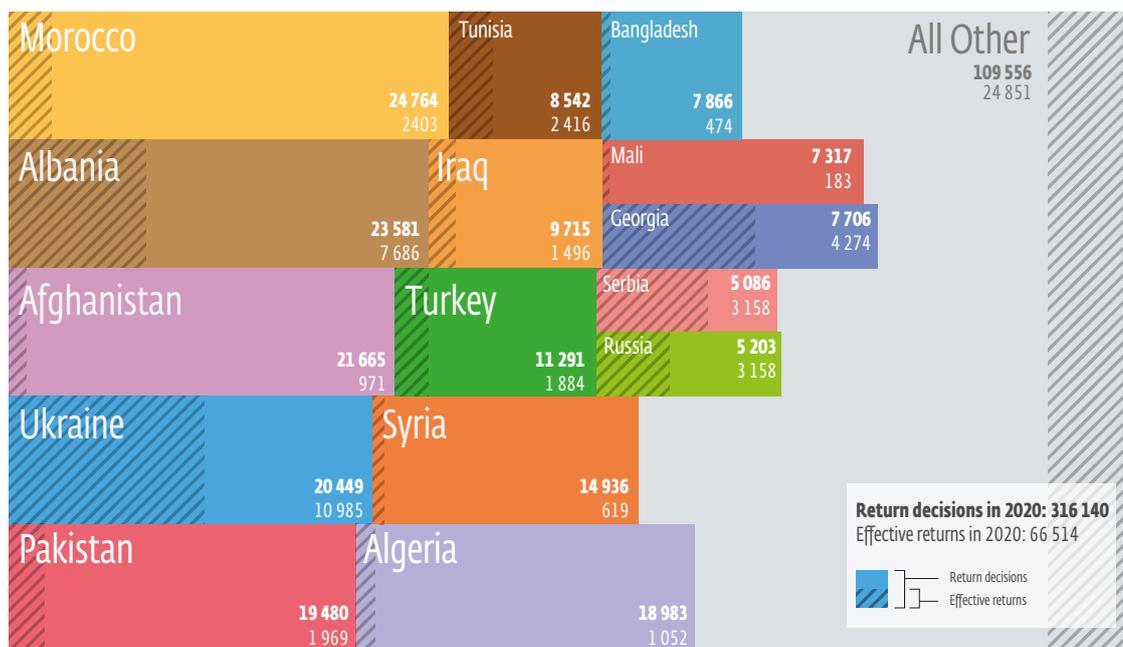
Turkish nationals (394) were the third most commonly detected at the EU's external borders. They were mostly detected on air routes on entry to EU MS/SAC from Turkey.

Situation concerning intra-EU/Schengen secondary movements

In 2020, the number of fraudulent document users detected on secondary movements within the EU/Schengen area (over 8 100 fraudulent document users in possession of nearly 10 000 fraudulent documents) significantly decreased by 63% compared to 2019. This figure of 8 100 constitutes a record low since official EDF data collection from all EU MS/SAC began in 2013. This development was again caused by the COVID-19 outbreak but also by the fact that all travel towards the UK was newly classified as 'on exit to a third country' instead of detections on secondary movements between the EU/Schengen area and the UK. Most cases were detected on air routes, in particular between Greece and other EU MS/SAC.

In 2018, the Agency launched the **Centre of Excellence for Combatting Document Fraud**. The Centre's aim is to maximize EU Member States and third countries operational capabilities in combating document fraud and related cross-border crimes in Frontex operations at external air-, land- and sea-borders. Its mission is to emphasize Frontex expertise in identity and travel document fraud, pursuing operational excellence for the benefit of border guards and law enforcement. This Centre is the primary entity for supporting operational response and coordination of field activities against document fraud, providing close to real time support to border guards and other law enforcement bodies, and developing existing/new products and services to satisfy their operational needs.

The number of migrants attempting to depart Greece with fraudulent documents remained high despite the overall decrease caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, Malta recorded an increase from 180 document fraud cases in 2019 to 320 cases in 2020. As regards main nationalities, Syrian, Turkish and Afghan nationals accounted for nearly half of all document fraudsters stopped on intra-EU/Schengen movements in 2020. Counterfeit EU ID cards were the most frequently misused.

Morocco			Tunisia		Bangladesh		All Other
24 764 2403			**8 542** 2 416		**7 866** 474		**109 556** 24 851

Albania	Iraq	Mali
23 581 7 686	**9 715** 1 496	**7 317** 183

Georgia **7 706** 4 274

Afghanistan	Turkey	Serbia
21 665 971	**11 291** 1 884	**5 086** 3 158

Russia **5 203** 3 158

Ukraine	Syria
20 449 10 985	**14 936** 619

Pakistan	Algeria
19 480 1 969	**18 983** 1 052

Return decisions in 2020: 316 140
Effective returns in 2020: 66 514

— Return decisions
— Effective returns

Please note that the number of effective returns may sometimes be larger than return decisions, as a return decision issued in a given month may be effectively enforced at a later date. Also, return decisions may be issued without prejudice to the person's right to apply for asylum. Readmissions between Member States are not included (for example between France and Italy). Effective returns do not necessarily mean returns to the country of origin and, for example in the case of Syrians, they include returns of persons to third countries considered to be safe (for example from Hungary to Serbia).

Source: RDC data as of 15 February 2021

5.5 Returns

The COVID-19 pandemic had a decelerating effect on return activities in EU MS/SAC. An assessment of effective returns conducted by Member States in 2020 shows that the total number (around 66 000)[1] decreased by around 50% compared with 2019. While January and February 2020 figures were on par with the same months in 2019, in March 2020, only around 6 000 effective returns were reported. This is one third fewer than in March 2019. April 2020 was significantly affected by the pandemic – only 892 effective returns were reported, which represents less than 10% of the April 2019 figure. From May the monthly number of effective returns slowly picked up and peaked at 6 400 in August, which was still only around 60% of what was reported in August 2019.

The trend of effective returns was not in line with the number of return decisions issued in 2020, which was even higher than in 2019 (+6%, at around 316 000). While numbers in January and February 2020, before the outbreak of the pandemic in Europe, were somewhat higher than in the preceding year, the number of return decisions decreased in March, April

and May, during the first set of significant restrictive measures of European authorities to fight the pandemic. Again, in the second half of 2020, return decisions were comparable to those of 2019.

Between 2011 (when Frontex data collection on return began) and 2019, the yearly number of effective returns remained relatively stable at around 150 000, only to a very limited extent influenced by the actual irregular migration situation. Hence the return situation in 2020 was unprecedented in terms of its abrupt decrease. Data reported by Member States in 2020 show that neither the irregular migration pressure nor the number of asylum applications and decisions decreased to the extent that effective returns did.

Since 2013, the gap between effective returns and return decisions has slowly been growing. In 2013, the number of effective returns amounted to 71% of the return decisions reported by Member States. By 2019, this share had fallen to 46%. In 2020, the pandemic accelerated this trend, as the number of conducted returns amounted to only 21% of the return decisions issued.

In 2020, the reduction in return activities was mainly caused by limitations placed on international travel and decreased activities of EU MS/SAC and third-country consular authorities. As long as the measures against COVID-19

prevail, the number of effective returns will remain significantly lower than before the outbreak of the pandemic.

The combination of an ongoing and stable issuance of return decisions and fewer actual returns is likely to lead to a significant backlog in returns once COVID-19-related travel restrictions are lifted. On the other hand, the potentially slower distribution of vaccines to many countries of origin is likely to lead to ongoing limitations for return activities throughout 2021 and possibly 2022.

However, variations in the number of return decisions exist that are largely reliant on what data Member States exactly report, which mainly depends on the practices in place in each Member State when issuing return decisions. For example, in some EU countries, several different authorities are in charge of issuing return decisions, but not all of them might be reporting this data to the Return Data Collection (RDC). In addition, according to the national legislation in some Member States, an irregular migrant might also receive several return decisions that are reported, thereby accumulating a sizable share of this indicator. It can therefore be asserted that, when taking into account the aforementioned caveats, no direct comparison or link between the indicators of return decisions and effective returns should be established.

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1   At time of writing, several EU MS/SAC had not submitted data for the full year 2020. Annex Table 13 gives detailed information.

Regional overview of returns

European third countries

Return decisions issued to nationals of **Western Balkan** countries grew significantly, from around 26 000 in 2019 to almost 35 000 in 2020. The increase concerned all Western Balkan nationalities, with a higher proportion of decisions issued to Albanian nationals by Greece.

In contrast, effective returns of Western Balkan nationals decreased by one third, from around 23 800 in 2019 to almost 15 000 in 2020. While returns to Albania halved, returns to other Western Balkan countries decreased by only 15%.

Returns to the Western Balkans are to be seen against the background of a decreasing irregular migration pressure in 2020, both in terms of asylum applications and illegal stay. Likewise, the number of first-instance asylum decisions (most of which were negative) decreased substantially in 2020: in the case of Albanian nationals by 50% compared to 2019.[2]

In relation to Eastern European nationals both return indicators decreased between 2019 and 2020: return decisions by 33% to 32 003, and effective returns by 57% to 16 664.

Asia and the Middle East

Overall, around 35% of return decisions in 2020 were issued to nationals of Asian and Middle Eastern countries, which represents a growth of 5% compared with 2019. The number of related effective returns halved.

Although the irregular migration pressure from Afghanistan and Pakistan was lower in 2020, the number of return decisions issued to these nationals was significant, with an increase of 17% and 14% to 21 600 and 19 400 respectively. At the same time, effective returns of Afghans decreased by 41%, to only 971 in 2020. To Pakistan, only 1 969 persons were returned, 34% fewer than in 2019. During the first nine months of 2020 alone, Member States issued 10 800

	2019		2020	
	Return Decisions	**Effective Returns**	**Return Decisions**	**Effective Returns**
Western Balkans	25 920	23 844	34 979	14 940
Eastern Europe	46 190	38 036	32 003	16 664
Western Africa	26 131	5 226	28 329	1 837
Northern Africa	46 153	19 884	58 496	6 541
Eastern Africa	9 903	1 638	8 262	583
Southern Asia	55 057	10 239	61 016	5 284
Middle East	40 899	8 471	40 154	4 460
Caucasus	8 745	9 326	9 560	5 188
Latin America and the Caribbean	18 585	10 776	18 240	6 454

Source: RDC data as of 15 February 2021

negative first-instance asylum decisions to Afghans and 12 500 to Pakistanis.[3]

In absolute numbers, the most significant decline in effective returns concerned countries of the Caucasus region. 4 274 Georgians were returned in 2020, compared to around 7 300 in 2019. The number of Armenians and Azerbaijanis returned decreased by 53% and 54% to only 538 and 376 respectively.

In 2020, fewer return decisions were issued to Iraqi and Palestinian nationals (-27% and -39%), which was in line with fewer nationals from these two countries being detected for illegal border-crossing or illegal stay. Effective returns to these two countries decreased by around 46%.

Far fewer returns were also carried out in relation to Chinese and Mongolian nationals, down from around 2 400 and 550 in 2019 , respectively to only around 670 and 230 in 2020.

Africa

Approximately a third of all return decisions in the EU were issued to nationals of African countries: Between 2019 and 2020, the number of decisions remained roughly similar at just over 95 000. Those issued to nationals of Algeria and Tunisia rose considerably, by 50% and 96% to 18 900 and 8 500 respectively.

At the same time, between 2019 and 2020, effective returns to Africa decreased by more than two thirds. The most significant absolute decline was registered for North Africans. While in 2019, around 20 000 persons from North Africa were returned, the number decreased to fewer than 6 600 in 2020. The number

of returns of Algerians and Moroccans decreased by respectively 80% and 75%, to around 1 000 and 2 400. At the same time, the irregular migration pressure from these two countries and the entire North African region grew significantly, as border crossings in 2020 more than doubled.

The number of return decisions issued to Western African migrants remained roughly stable in 2020 at around 28 000. In contrast, the number of effective returns, which was already low in 2019 (around 5 200), further decreased in 2020 to 1 800.

Between 2019 and 2020, return decisions issued to citizens of Eastern African countries decreased by 16% to around 8 200. Similar to other regions, returns in relation to Eastern Africans (especially Eritreans and Ethiopians) also decreased, by 64%, down to fewer than 600 in 2020.

Latin America and the Caribbean

The number of return decisions issued to nationals of Latin America and the Caribbean remained stable at around 18 200 in 2020. 2019 saw a strong increase in asylum applications of Latin American nationals, which doubled to more than 100 000. Also the number of negative first-instance asylum decisions increased, from around 22 900 in 2019 to 64 500 in 2020. Return decisions issued to nationals of this region remained stable, at around 18 400.

That withstanding, the number of effective returns decreased by 40%, to fewer than 6 500 in 2020. While returns of nationals of South and Central American countries decreased by roughly half, returns of citizens of Caribbean island states declined to a larger extent, by 85%.

2 According to Eurostat. Only asylum decision figures for the first nine months of the year taken into consideration.

3 According to Eurostat. Only asylum decision figures for the first nine months of the year taken into consideration.

5.6 An Integrated Asylum-Migration Picture by EASO, Europol and Frontex[1]

In 2020 European citizens faced fundamental challenges to their way of life, including to the right of free movement within the Schengen Area. The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated emergency measures implemented by the European Union and Schengen Associated Countries (EU/SACs) also had an impact on the functioning and daily work of national asylum and law enforcement authorities, including border control authorities. In particular, asylum services were partially or fully suspended in some EU/SACs, and asylum authorities had to revert to other working arrangements (e.g. home office, shift systems) and rely more on digital technologies. Border guard authorities faced a human resource shortage caused by personnel on sick leave or quarantine in the context of a more complex operational environment linked to the emergency measures. Investigators also faced changes in working arrangements and a human resource shortage. In addition, many law enforcement investigative authorities have had to reallocate resources to new tasks, as a result of the shift in national priorities and the prioritisation of public safety.

COVID-19 and national emergency measures also had a considerable influence on opportunities for migration to Europe and internal movements across the EU/SACs. The number of **illegal border-crossings (IBCs) on the external land and sea borders** fell by 12%, to just over 125 000 detections. It is the lowest recorded number of IBCs since 2013.

The spread of COVID-19 and related emergency measures had an impact on the activities of **criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling**. After an initial slow-down in migrant smuggling activities, criminal networks quickly adapted their *modi operandi* and resumed their activities. This was particularly seen among criminal networks offering services for secondary movements to irregular migrants already present in the EU/SAC or in neighbouring regions.[2]

Meanwhile, the number of **applications for international protection** lodged in 2020 was 31% smaller compared to a year ago. In the last months of 2019 (except December) and in January and February 2020, the number of asylum applications rose; however, in the second half of March the situation changed completely. In April and May, the months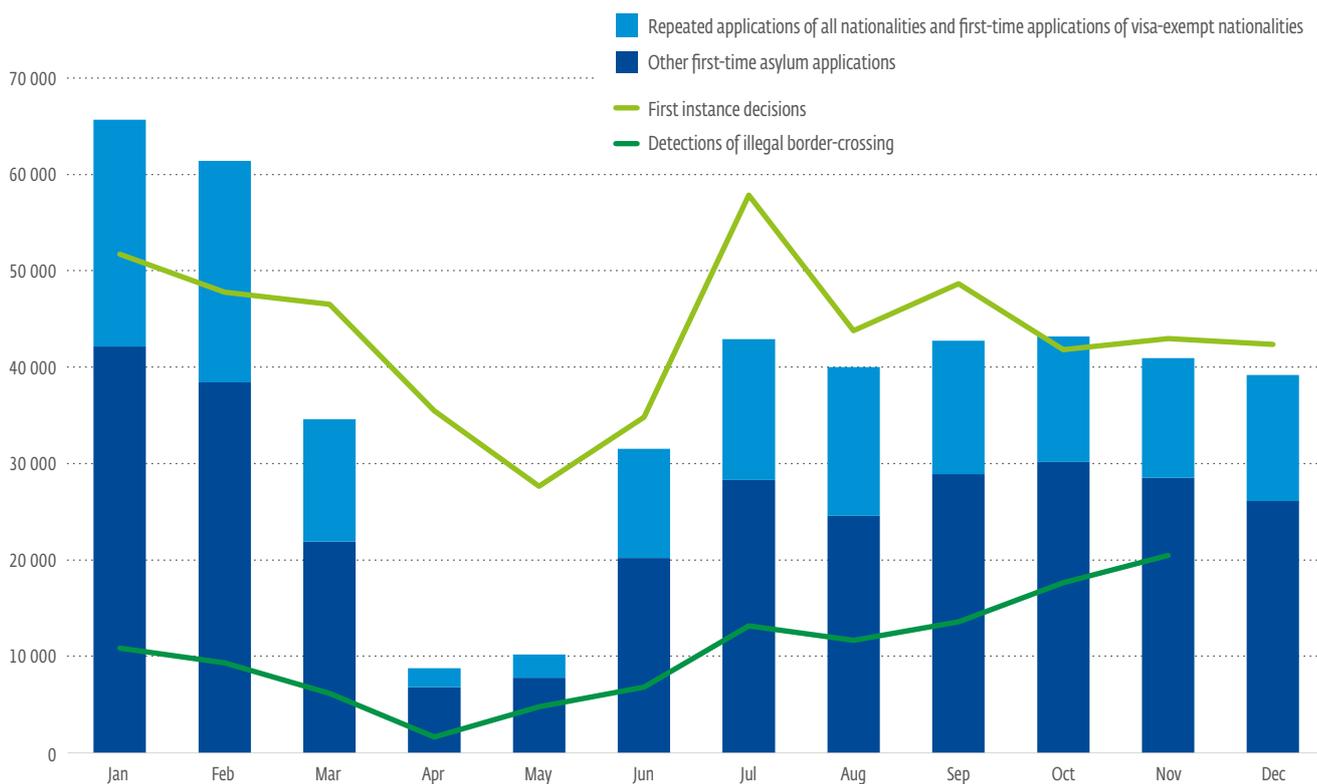 most affected by the pandemic, applications were at about one sixth of what they had been at the beginning of the year. In the summer, the numbers began to rise but they remained at about two-thirds of the early 2020 values for the rest of the year. The main countries of origin of asylum applicants in 2020 were Syria, Afghanistan, Venezuela and Colombia, in line with the previous year but accounting for a higher proportion of the total (37%). Overall, some 461 300 applications for international protection were lodged by third-country nationals in the EU/SACs.

Hence, there were nearly four asylum applications for each detected illegal border-crossing. Such a discrepancy is not new, although the gap between the two indicators has narrowed slightly since 2019. There are multiple reasons for the discrepancy. An important one is that some third-country nationals **apply for asylum more than once in the same EU/SAC** after receiving a final decision on a previous application. Such repeated applications represented 11% of the total in 2020, a marginally higher proportion than in 2019. Among citizenship groups with at least 1 000 applications, Serbians, Macedonians, Russians, Azerbaijanis, Kosovars, and Armenians had the highest proportions of repeated applicants: close to or more than a third for each. While high proportions of repeat applications are typical for these nationalities, all of them had higher shares than in 2019.

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1   This chapter may use different formulations and abbreviations than found elsewhere in the report due to its collaborative drafting.

2   Europol 2020, How COVID-19-related crime infected Europe during 2020, accessible at https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-documents/how-covid-19-related-crime-infected-europe-during-2020

The gap between applications for international protection and detections of illegal border-crossings persisted in 2020 but has recently become narrower, especially if repeated applications and applications lodged by nationals of visa-exempt countries are discounted. For most of 2020, more decisions were issued at first instance than asylum applications were lodged.

Legend:
- Repeated applications of all nationalities and first-time applications of visa-exempt nationalities
- Other first-time asylum applications
- First instance decisions
- Detections of illegal border-crossing

The statistics presented in this analysis are based on data collected by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and the European Asylum Office (EASO) under different indicators; direct comparisons between these data are thus not possible. EASO data are provisional and cover EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland. Europol's analysis is based on EU Member States and operational partners' contributions 2019–2020.

There was also an increase in the proportion of Nigerians applying repeatedly in the same country – to 27% in 2020.

Many asylum seekers do not arrive in Europe illegally, but cross the external border in a regular fashion. Some of them arrive with a visa, and nationals of 62 states and territories worldwide are exempt from the visa requirement. Many of the latter represent important places of origin for asylum applicants. In 2020, a quarter of all applicants were from **visa-exempt countries**, despite a decrease in the absolute number from 2019 by more than a third. Given the implementation of travel restrictions on most third countries since March 2020, it is likely that most of the applications made since were of third-country nationals who had arrived at the EU/SACs earlier but had not yet lodged their applications. Venezuelans and Colombians remained the most numerous in the visa-free group, but considerable numbers of applications also continued to be lodged by Georgians, Peruvians, Ukrainians and Hondurans, among others. Although most visa-exempt citizens enter legally, some **overstay** their **permission to stay** and then become irregular. EU/SACs reported the detection of around 48 500 illegally staying third-country nationals who had entered the EU/SACs legally, 38% fewer than in 2019. Most migrants in this group were nationals of Ukraine, Albania, Georgia and Serbia.

In addition, sometimes people who arrive in the EU illegally attempt to evade registration on arrival, in particular if their planned destination is another country. In other words, third-country nationals sometimes **crossed the external land and sea borders undetected** and then continued their journey inside the EU/SACs area. This situation is well illustrated by cases of migrant smuggling reported to Europol. In one case an organised crime group facilitated irregular migrants into Poland and then to Western Europe by concealing them in compartments in vans or among

commodities in lorries.[3] The deployment of the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps will advance border management and contribute to reducing the number of such undetected IBCs.

Some irregular migrants also **choose to enter the EU/SAC area by air**. In order to enhance their chances of reaching their preferred destinations, they often use **fraudulent documents** (e.g. counterfeit visas, passports, and residence permits, authentic but fraudulently obtained visas, authentic documents used as impostors). Criminal networks offer facilitation by air, which is usually linked to high fees and supported by the provision of fraudulent documents. Organised crime is often involved in the production of false documents and in illegally obtaining and distributing genuine documents. Fraudulent documents are increasingly traded online. Criminals offer a wide range of genuine or false documents on online marketplaces and use such platforms to receive orders directly from clients. Due to COVID-19 and related travel restrictions, compared to 2019 the number of individuals detected at airports with fraudulent documents on entry to the EU/SACs fell by 57% to around 1 500 cases in 2020. At the same time, however, EU/SACs reported an incoming passenger flow at their airports that decreased by up to 75%. The comparison shows that the relative risk of document fraud has not diminished during the pandemic, especially in relation to nationalities that frequently apply for asylum: the highest-ranking among document fraudsters detected on entry at EU/SACs airports were third-country nationals who claimed to be from Turkey, Iran, Ukraine, Syria and Georgia.

Not all applicants remain in an asylum procedure until it is completed. Sometimes asylum **applications** are

3 https://www.europol.europa.eu/ newsroom/news/polish-authorities- arrest-8-in-latest-migrant-smuggling- sting

withdrawn explicitly or **implicitly**. The latter usually happens when a migrant absconds, which might be because the migrant plans to reapply in a different EU/SAC at a later stage. Occasionally, migrant smugglers encourage irregular migrants to apply for international protection once in a transit country, in order to exploit the time needed for the authorities to examine the asylum application. During this time, facilitators make the necessary arrangements for the irregular migrants' further facilitation across the EU/SAC territory towards their country of destination. In 2020, one application was implicitly withdrawn for every 13 lodged. This phenomenon was particularly relevant for Moroccans, for whom the ratio of lodged to implicitly withdrawn applications was approximately three to one. Among third-country nationals applying for asylum in high numbers in 2020, the ratio was also relatively high for citizens of Egypt, India, Turkey and Algeria.

When a migrant lodges an asylum application, the claim is examined by national asylum authorities. The length of this process varies across EU/SACs and countries of origin. The examination results in a decision at first instance, which may be challenged in appeal or review. In 2020, similar to applications, **decisions at first instance** fell compared to 2019, but only marginally. Moreover, the 521 000 decisions issued were more numerous than the applications lodged, which is a new development (compared to both 2018 and 2019). This implies that in the context of reduced activities during COVID-19 emergency measures, EU/SACs focused on clearing the backlog of asylum applications.

In 2020, just under a third of decisions at first instance granted **refugee status or subsidiary protection**, in line with the previous year. Unsuccessful applicants may submit an appeal. Once a **negative decision** becomes final, the next step in the process is a **return** decision, following which failed asylum seekers

are to return to their country of origin. While between 2019 and 2020 the number of return decisions increased by 6% to 320 000, the number of effective returns of third-country nationals halved, amounting to only 67 000 in 2020. Accordingly, the gap between the two indicators continued to widen.

Not all third-country nationals who arrive in the EU/SACs irregularly intend to apply for international protection or travel for the purposes of seeking asylum. Some decide to **remain illegally** (e.g. because they may not have legal grounds for protection). In spite of the significant decrease in irregular migration pressure at the EU's external borders, EU/SACs reported around 370 000 detections of illegal stay in 2020, which represents a decrease of only 8% compared to 2019.

On the other hand, others are brought to EU/SACs and moved across the free movement area for **purposes other than irregular migration**. Victims of trafficking in human beings originating outside the EU/SACs are often trafficked using the same infrastructure and routes used by migrant smugglers. In parallel with some smuggling cases, especially in the case of lengthy journeys and expensive travel arrangements, irregular migrants agree to become indebted to their facilitators and repay their debt upon arrival, which often leads to exploitative and inhumane working practices and prolonged periods of debt bondage.

The pandemic and national efforts to contain it led to a different situational picture in 2020, and the effect continues in 2021. In this context EASO, Europol and Frontex remain committed to supporting their stakeholders in national authorities and working jointly for a better understanding of an integrated asylum-migration picture in the EU/SACs.

6. Other Border Management Challenges

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6.1 Terrorism

A global and enduring threat

From the various typologies of terrorism, Islamist extremism remains the foremost terror threat to the EU. Many of the (re)estimated 50 000 foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) that were active in conflict zones in Syria and Iraq are still unaccounted for. In fact, over the past number of years, there has been a resurgence of Da'esh related incidents in both Syria and Iraq.

"Da'esh remains resilient and al-Qaeda has ingrained itself in local communities and conflicts. Both organizations and their global affiliates and supporters continue to generate violence around the world, whether through insurgency tactics, the direction and facilitation of terrorism or providing the inspiration for attacks. Da'esh operations have increased in the core conflict zone of Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. Behind this trend lies a more complex picture, in which Da'esh maintains the ambition to control territory and populations but, for now, represents an entrenched rural insurgency without the reach to threaten urban areas on a sustained basis.

The impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on terrorism has varied between conflict zones and non-conflict zones and between short- and longer-term threats. Groups are using the outbreak to advance propaganda and fundraising and, in some regions, are seeking to take advantage of perceptions that the attention of security forces is diverted elsewhere. At the same time, the pandemic has made cross-border travel more difficult and targets more elusive, and the operational tempo of attacks has slowed discernibly in some regions.

The international community continues to struggle with whether and how to return and reintegrate fighters from the conflict zone and their family members into their countries of origin and/or nationality. The global pandemic has further complicated efforts to provide the relevant consular and screening services and presents additional challenges to a range of counter-terrorism efforts."[1]

No other predominant conflict zone has emerged after Da'esh's loss of territory in Syria and Iraq. Many fighters have melted into the local population and have stayed there, while others are still lying low in certain neighbouring countries.

Depending on the developments in various conflict zones around the world, some may seek to move elsewhere or else be directed to do so. Irrespective of whether such travelling is sanctioned by the relevant groups' structures, the use of regular or irregular movements – or both – is still assessed to depend on a variety of chances and constraints.

1   UN reports of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017).

The border dimension

Systematic database checks

Checks at the external borders remain one of the main safeguards of the Schengen area and contribute to the internal security of the EU. Checks against databases must cover regular and irregular movements, at all types of border and in all directions. Borders provide challenges but also opportunities in countering terrorism as they offer a geographical spread where EU MS/SAC can take executive actions and pursue judicial or prosecutorial actions. Therefore EU MS/SAC, with the support of JHA Agencies, can make the best use of the legislative framework that aims to deter, disrupt and detect terrorist-related movements and detain those involved in terrorist-related activities.

Maximising database consultations

Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 reiterates the Agency's supporting role to EU MS/SAC counter-terrorism efforts. Frontex activities can support EU MS/SAC in identifying travelling terrorists or 'subjects of interest' through detailed checks.

Article 82(10) of the EBCG Regulation, states that "the host Member State shall authorise members of the teams to consult Union databases, the consultation of which is necessary for fulfilling operational aims specified in the operational plan on border checks [...] The host Member State may also authorise members of the teams to consult its national databases where necessary for the same purpose." Frontex can with the implementation of Article 82(10) have access to the Schengen Information System and thereby support EU MS/SAC in the efforts to identify terrorists at the external border.

The Schengen Borders Code and the Schengen Information System changes plus the introduction of the Entry/Exit System, the Electronic Travel Information and Authorisation System, the interoperability between EU information systems and the European Search Portal are all aimed at improving and maximising database consultations within the border dimension.

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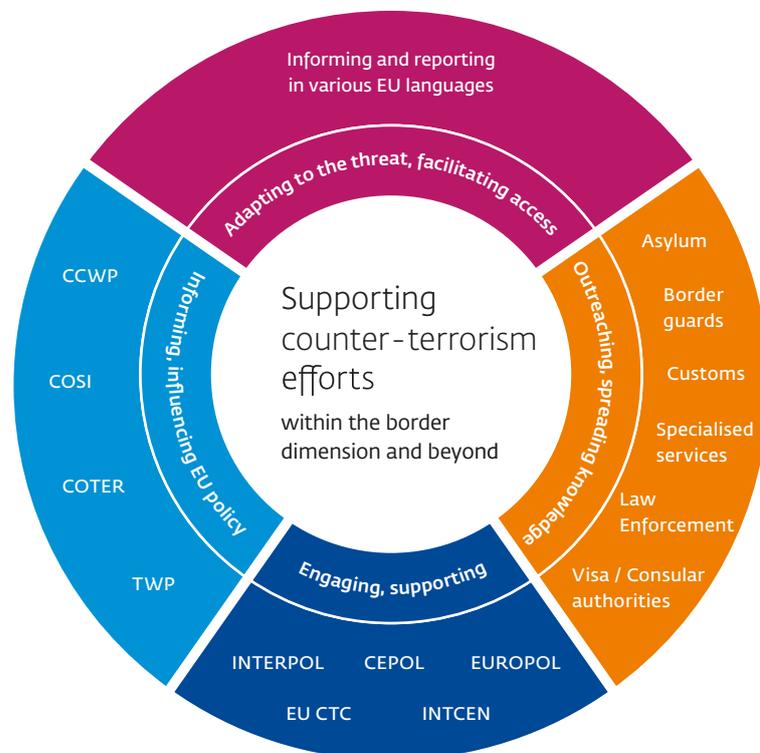
6.2 Cross-Border Crime: Firearms Smuggling

Firearms trafficking is a global threat that impacts society in multiple ways. It is a major security concern, and is thus central to law enforcement efforts and activities. Firearms are instrumental in violence, are crime enablers and fuel armed conflicts and terrorism. The most common form of weapons trafficking involves small arms and light weapons, but the trade varies significantly from region to region, due to the varying legal requirements and firearms legislation in different countries.

Illegal firearms enable other forms of crime by means of coercion and intimidation. Recent terrorist attacks in the EU, as well as accompanying seizures of firearms during various cross-border and inland operations, demonstrate the multidimensional and multi-criminal nature of this phenomenon.

In Europe, the predominant type of firearms smuggling is the so-called 'ant trade' (Cross-border smuggling of relatively small numbers of firearms and ammunition mostly using passenger cars),

carried out by both organised crime groups and individuals, and often originating from post-conflict countries. Other trends have been increasingly observed in recent years, including the smuggling of easy-to-convert blank firing weapons or the online purchase of gun parts and components, delivered by postal services.

In 2020, firearms smuggling was, like other fields of cross-border crime, affected by limited cross-border flows and changes in the intensity of checks. The composition of the seizures followed the pattern of detections in previous years. Most detections took place on entry, at land borders, in cars or hidden in travellers' luggage. The majority of ammunition and weapons seizures hence were not related to large-scale trafficking. Smugglers claimed that their violations were based on the negligence or inattention of legal owners who inadvertently had left parts of weapons in the vehicle, and whose weapons are designated for personal use or protection.

With the limitation of non-essential movements and stricter controls, such incidents declined in 2020 – a side effect of the pandemic. Besides firearms[1] and ammunition, seizures of cold arms, prohibited pepper sprays, electric shockers and other weapons were also frequently reported. Explosives were seldom detected in 2020.

While significant amounts of firearms are usually trafficked by **sea**, only minor detections were reported in 2020. Moreover, seizures on international **flights** were limited, since the risk of
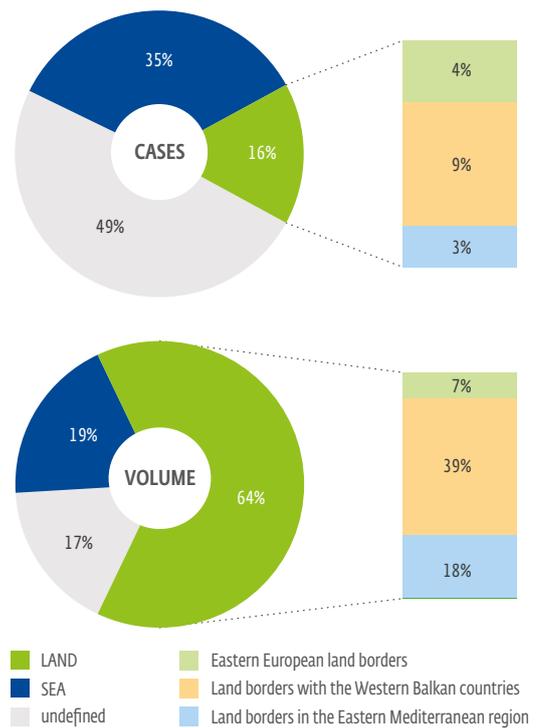
1   In the context of detections at external borders, the term 'firearms' does not follow the general definition. As the primary purpose of border guard measures is to detect and prevent the movement of firearms and related cross-border crimes, the focus is more on the physical appearance at the moment border-control measures are taken than on later forensic examination and intelligence. Firearms in this context also include weapons like gas pistols or decoration weapons.

Besides the detection of 'ant smuggling', some seizures indicate a larger-scale weapon trafficking.

In one case at the external borders with the WB, a weapon found in a Czech-registered car led to a thorough search of the vehicle. Six 'AK-47' automatic rifles, 12 magazines and 231 pieces of 7.62 mm ammunition were found in the trunk.

Firearms smuggling

CASES
- 35%
- 16%
- 49%
- 4%
- 9%
- 3%

VOLUME
- 19%
- 64%
- 17%
- 7%
- 39%
- 18%

- 🟩 LAND
- 🟦 SEA
- ⬜ undefined
- 🟩 Eastern European land borders
- 🟧 Land borders with the Western Balkan countries
- 🟦 Land borders in the Eastern Mediterranean region

Source: Aggregated EU MS/SAC-provided data

detection of such weapons at airports is higher due to the use of metal detectors, x-rays and explosives trace-detection (for both passengers and their luggage).

The **land borders** with the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova and Turkey remained the border sections most at risk from firearms smuggling. While increased seizures by national authorities in neighbouring post-crisis areas might indicate that the EU's external borders are facing a greater threat, the same volume of smuggling could not be confirmed through detections at these borders.

The situation on the EU's external borders is in line with the general global development. Several trends identified globally will pose challenges for border authorities. For example, the smuggling of firearms broken down into components is much harder to detect, and such smuggled special components and accessories can significantly alter the lethality and use of a firearm. Smuggled components can also complete a set of

3D-printed parts. Shipping by fast parcels further adds to the problem.

The WCO report for 2019 highlights that 82% of all detections made by customs officers were based on risk profiling, while routine controls accounted for around 15%, but generally led to larger volumes of seizures. Such conclusions once again underline the significance of cooperation with all EU and international partners, as well as with Border Guard and Customs authorities, bridge existing information and intelligence gaps, and ensure an appropriate, comprehensive and tailored response to transportation at the borders through detailed checks of travellers based on profiling.

6.3 Cross-Border Crime: Drug Trafficking

Drug trafficking in Europe has maintained or even surpassed the levels of previous years. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused short-term downturns in smuggling activities, but criminal networks have managed to adapt, and pre-pandemic levels have returned. Despite the pandemic, smuggling of illicit drugs continues to be a serious threat at the EU's external borders.

In 2020 there were 609 detections of drug smuggling and 145 tonnes of various illicit drugs seized during Frontex-coordinated joint operations. Although this was a slight decrease of reported incidents (-7%) compared to 2019, it was an increase in quantity seized (11%).

The majority of detections (72%) and quantities (98%) were reported at sea borders or adjacent land areas. While detections at land BCPs remained relatively high (17%), the quantity of drugs seized was smaller (1%), confirming that criminal networks continued to rely mostly on maritime routes for high-volume drug smuggling. The continuous high number of detections at air borders (11%) shows the growing importance of air routes, which smugglers use even in times of passenger flow restrictions.

Drug seizures were mostly reported in the Western Mediterranean region (79%). The Central and Eastern Mediterranean sea borders also saw several high-volume seizures. In contrast, the land borders in the Balkans reported single seizures of various drugs and volumes, usually concealed in passenger cars or trucks and trailers. The Eastern land borders reported a relatively high number of drug detections, but most of them referred to illicit substances for personal use found in personal belongings.

Similar to previous years, detections of hashish were most common, with 68% of all incidents and 88% of the volume of drugs seized in 2020. Herbal cannabis represented 14% of seizures but only 1% of the total quantity. Cocaine seizures have also been increasingly reported during the last couple of years, representing 9% of seizures and 10% of volume in 2020. Reporting of heroin and synthetic drug seizures remained at a very low level.

Cannabis is the most popular drug worldwide and the most cultivated. Generally, **herbal cannabis** and **hashish** are trafficked in bulk and traffickers put less effort into concealment, often abandoning the drugs at sea or while crossing land borders if there is a risk of capture. Large-scale cultivation and low production costs have ensured high accessibility. Migrant smuggling and other criminal activities have often been combined with drug smuggling activities or have been committed by the same criminal networks.
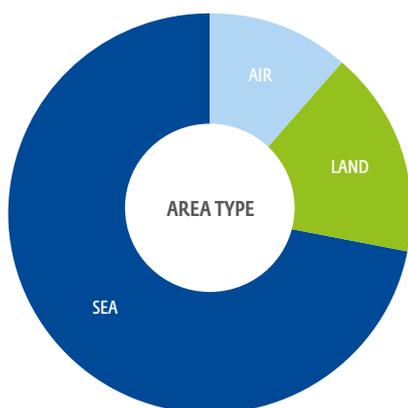
Reporting of cannabis smuggling has stayed at high levels in recent years due to the good level of cooperation between Frontex and national law enforcement authorities in the most affected regions. Around 208 tonnes of hashish and 2.5 tonnes of herbal cannabis were seized in 2020, mostly by the Spanish, Italian and Greek authorities.

Cannabis resin is mainly trafficked across the Strait of Gibraltar. Outdoor cannabis cultivation is widely spread worldwide in areas with favourable conditions. Southeast Europe and the Western Balkans in particular have been associated with large-scale outdoor cultivation, while Central and Western European countries have developed indoor production.
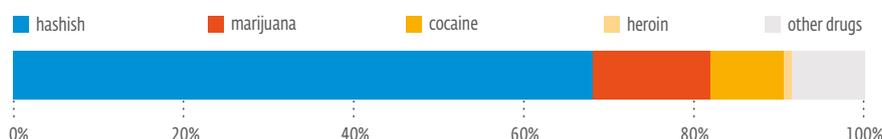
In recent years law enforcement authorities have witnessed an exponential growth in **cocaine** trafficking from Latin America. The demand for cocaine in Europe has remained strong which, together with national reports of large detections at some of the main EU entry points, has given grounds for 2020 estimates to surpass the record high quantities of 2019. E.g. in 2020, the Dutch and Belgian authorities recorded a continuation of the record seizures of cocaine on the transatlantic routes from mainly Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia. Along with these direct routes, however, cocaine was also rerouted either through West and North Africa or the Adriatic and the Western Balkans. The Black Sea region was also used to diversify smuggling channels.

The growth in high-volume cocaine trafficking in containers on various maritime routes stands out as a major trend. The main entry points were ports in Western and Northern Europe, although seizures in the Mediterranean were on the rise. Criminals often attempt to conceal the routes and the origins of the cargo, preferably presenting it as arriving via unsuspected routes. Criminals also deal with the logistics of unloading and transporting drugs within Europe, often using the cover of legal business structures and infiltrating relevant control authorities, as well as relying on encrypted communication apps.

Drug Seizures in 2020 at the external border

AIR

LAND

AREA TYPE

SEA

DRUG TYPE

■ hashish ■ marijuana ■ cocaine ■ heroin ■ other drugs

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

A Frontex canine team from Portugal helped the Spanish authorities to confiscate a record 4.6 tonnes of hashish with a street value of EUR 26 million at the port of Algeciras.

In 2020 Frontex received reports of the seizure of 24 tonnes of cocaine, which is an 87% rise on the previous year, mostly by Spain and Portugal in the Western Mediterranean and North Atlantic. Single cocaine seizures were reported at Greek and Italian ports as well. Additionally, there was an increasing number of detections of drugs by the French authorities in the English Channel en route to the UK.

Law enforcement authorities witnessed intensive smuggling of smaller quantities of cocaine at land borders and airports. Generally, quarantine rules and restrictions on travel, especially for non-EU arrivals, have affected trafficking by drug couriers. On the other hand, air cargo is a crucial enabler for online trade and new digital business models. COVID-19 has led to an overall 20% rise in cargo flights worldwide, and estimates show that around 80% of online trade is transported by air[1], including various illicit goods. Cocaine and other drugs at EU airports have usually been detected in small postal packages but also in bigger cargo shipments.

Heroin is the most frequently used opioid and the main contributor to drug-related harm. The stable demand for heroin is determined by the high number of opioid users in the EU.[2]

In 2020 there was a decrease in seizures of heroin via the traditional land routes. 177 kg were seized in operational activities supported by Frontex. The detections were made at various locations, including land BCPs, seaports and airports.

Large quantities of heroin have usually been detected before being imported to the EU. However, in the last couple of years occasional large hauls in some EU Member States and third countries have pointed to the increasing activity of criminal groups within the EU and the diversification of trafficking channels, following not only the most used Balkan route, but also alternatives in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe.

Maritime routes have also gained popularity, with big seizures in the Adriatic and Aegean and at some EU seaports on the west and south coasts of Europe. Activity on routes towards Africa, as well as domestic heroin problems in some African countries, suggest an increasing risk of heroin trafficking onward to Europe via the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. This could lead to intensified smuggling of heroin at the Turkish, Greek and Italian maritime borders. The Black Sea region could also be considered as a transit zone for the import of heroin to EU Member States as well as to third countries on the Eastern land borders.

The trade in **synthetic drugs** and **precursors** nowadays is much more diverse, and global distribution depends on changes in demand. Industrial production of chemical substances ensures considerable accessibility of precursors for illegal drug laboratories. Dangerous and controlled substances are often trafficked disguised with counterfeit packaging and supporting documents. The misuse of legal drugs has also been a growing issue, and the substances produced by the chemical and pharmaceutical industries in Europe could also be a factor in drug-related harm.

The environmental impact of synthetic drug production has been a growing problem, which has resulted in illegal waste dumping and trafficking of dangerous substances through the EU's internal and external borders.

In 2020 the reduced capacity of China's economy, reduced demand from EU industry and transport issues caused by the pandemic led to the limited availability of some chemical substances which could be diverted to the manufacture of synthetic drugs. Scheduling of some of these substances in the export countries, e.g. China and India, has also contributed to the downward trend.

In the last couple of years there has been a rise of Captagon seizures at southern EU seaports arriving from the Middle East. A similar *modus operandi* has been observed for transporting drugs from the port of Latakia, Syria towards ports in the Central Mediterranean and Aegean, as well as the Black Sea region.[3] Various narcotic substances produced in the EU, Asia and Africa, e.g. ketamine and methamphetamine, have also been detected at EU airports en route to North America or at the English Channel en route to the UK.

Airmail has been used mostly for redistributing synthetic drugs to end customers and local drug dealers following online orders on the internet and the darknet. As a consequence of social limitations, street dealers have been partly replaced in 2020 by couriers delivering drugs directly to customers' homes.

The demand for illicit drugs in the EU will continue to be high, so criminals will continue to make investments in smuggling networks. Cultivation and production will also continue close to places of consumption. The accessibility of drugs and precursors, as well as the capacities of criminal organisations and economic factors, will determine the flows of illicit drugs through the EU's external borders.

1   IATA: The e-Commerce Impact on Air Cargo Operations, Nov 2020
2   EMCDDA European Drug Report 2020

3   Greece, Report CBC – Captagon Pills, Jul 2019; Frontex, Media Overview of Drug Trafficking in Europe in 2020, Feb 2021

6.4 Cross-Border Crime: Cigarette Smuggling

Trade in counterfeit goods is estimated to stand at 3.3% of global commerce, and continues to rise. This type of excise fraud presents a risk to the EU and is therefore addressed at the external borders by border, coast guard and customs authorities. Among the most lucrative businesses for individual criminals and criminal groups is the smuggling of tobacco products, which is considered a significant source of capital for organised crime, including terrorism. A 2019 report by the World Bank estimates that the global illicit tobacco trade market generates between 40 and 50 billion US dollars annually. Besides the monetary proceeds and the consequent losses in tax revenue, the true dimension of this crime field requires border authorities to monitor and take measures to prevent and combat such activities.

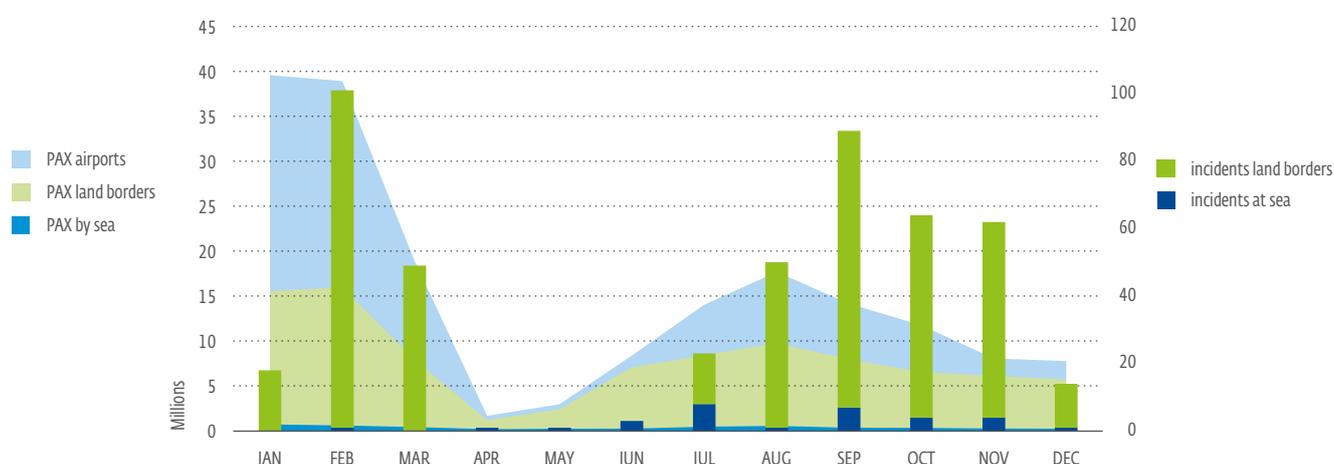According to a study (commissioned by the tobacco industry), the European market for illicit cigarettes reached a historical low in 2019, when EU consumers purchased 38.9 billion illicit cigarettes. Despite the overall decline of illicit cigarette consumption, which continued for the seventh consecutive year, the consumption of counterfeit cigarettes continued to grow. Illicit flows from markets outside the EU, continued to fall in 2019. However, illicit products reportedly originating in the EU – and destined for another EU country – increased in 2019.

In 2020, a total of twenty international operations involving the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) led to the seizure of nearly 370 million illegal cigarettes destined for the EU market. The majority were smuggled from countries outside the EU. More than two fifths of the cigarettes seized in this context originated in the Far East and another two fifth from eastern, south-eastern neighboring countries and the Western Balkans region.

The illicit trade in tobacco is to a large extent enabled by price differentials between EU Member States and/or neighbouring countries. Operational information exchanged via different channels indicates that serious and organised cigarette smuggling can be detected at all border types. Not only did individual consumers and small-scale smugglers from economically weak border regions try to take advantage of existing price differences, but criminal networks also tried to illicitly import cigarettes in large quantities, often to finance other illicit businesses.

Similar to other criminal activities, the pandemic and associated restrictions have strongly affected the smuggling of illicit cigarettes. During the first lockdown, supply chains were cut, and established *modi operandi* were interrupted for a longer period of time due to limitations on passenger flows at the external borders. Legal and illegal imports for

**Development Cigarette Smuggling
in relation to the passenger flow (PAX) 2020**

Source: FRAN and Frontex joint operations data as of 15 February 2021

Cigarette smuggling

CASES

88%

4% 8%

50%   18%   20%

VOLUME

40%

3%

57%

54%   2% 1%

■ LAND ■ SEA ■ AIR

▢ Eastern European land borders

▢ Land borders with the Western Balkan countries

▢ Land borders in the Eastern Mediterranean region
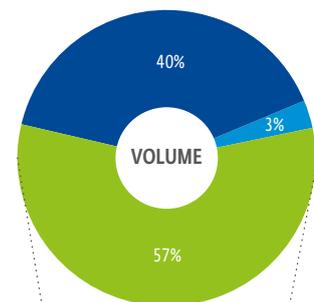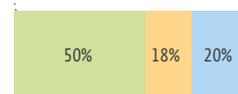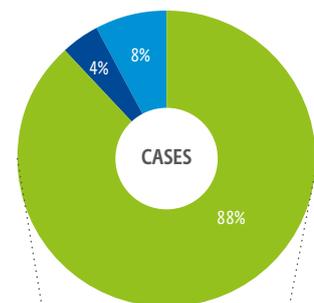
Source: Aggregated EU MS/SAC-provided data

In 2020, Frontex coordinated three and co-led two Joint Action Days – international operations that bring together national law enforcement authorities, international organisations and EU agencies, including Europol and Eurojust, to take on serious and organised crime. These operations were coordinated under the umbrella of the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT).

one's own consumption from neighbouring countries were therefore hampered or no longer possible (due to limitations on non-essential travel). The risk of being detected while 'ant smuggling' (multiple border crossings with small volumes of excise or illicit goods) rose as a result of more intense checks and significantly lower legal flows to blend in with. At the same time, both the lockdowns and decreases in consumers' disposable income fuel the demand for cheap tobacco products. The lockdowns and border closures disrupted the tobacco black market and limited the opportunities to ship illicit tobacco products from production sites outside the EU. Criminal groups have thus adapted their *modi operandi* to the new realities at the borders, leading to an increase in illegal production sites in the EU, closer to major target markets. The

smuggling of small quantities became less relevant in 2020. One of the ways to overcome or compensate for tighter restrictions was to blend illicit tobacco products into the legal transport of cargo. All means of transport were affected, from cargo trains, lorries and vans to shipments at sea. Similar to previous years, 'covering shipments' or specially built compartments to conceal goods in vehicles or in trains were designed for the purpose of smuggling cigarettes. Increased parcel shipments by air were also reported. With limited opportunities at BCPs, green borders and rivers were even more targeted in 2020. Existing cross-border infrastructures (tracks, sewage pipes...) were also (mis)-used, and in some regions technologies such as drones and motorised gliders were used to smuggle or drop packages.

Cigarette find during
Joint Action Day Arktos 2
© Frontex 2020

74 PEOPLE SMUGGLERS

419 CHILD TRAFFICKERS

249 POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF CHILD TRAFFICKING

423 FRAUDULENT DOCUMENTS

1 819 KG OF DRUGS

384 STOLEN CARS

38 MILLION CIGARETTES

51 WEAPONS

* Frontex led JAD Danube 5, Mobile 3, Arktos 2 and co-led JAD South Eastern Europe and EMPACT Action Day on Child Trafficking

Seizures in JADs are not purely based on border control measures: they include inland seizures and hence may differ from volumes mentioned in the analysis, which focuses exclusively on the external border.

6.5 Cross-Border Crime: Detections of Stolen Vehicles

Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a knock-on effect on motor vehicle crime in the EU. Long-persisting border restrictions both at the EU's external and internal Borders have limited the mobility of organised crime groups (OCGs) and increased the risk of detection. Some stockpiling of vehicles and parts has occurred, thereby putting economic pressure on criminal markets and forcing criminal groups to adapt their *modi operandi*.

In 2020, only 139 incidents related to 152 stolen vehicles were reported in the framework of Frontex-coordinated joint operations, which represents a 61% decrease compared with the preceding year.[1] Improved law-enforcement results towards the end of 2020 indicated that the authorities managed to adapt quickly to the new conditions.

The majority of the targeted stolen vehicles were passenger cars of common makes and models (76%), with criminals aiming to turn over a quick profit from selling the vehicles on the second-hand market, both physically in shops and scrap yards and on the internet. More new and expensive cars (including SUV, electric and hybrid) (6%) were targeted by well-organised and sophisticated criminal groups. Detections of trucks, trailers and minivans were also recorded representing roughly 5–6% of the total, while some specific vehicles and equipment constituted around 1% (e.g. industrial equipment, caravans and campers, boats and boat engines, etc.). The new environment has stimulated crime-as-a-service activity in which criminals are engaged based on specific demands. In this regard, although the volume of stolen vehicles might have decreased, the financial loss for individuals and related businesses remains high and may even have increased.

The main reasons for detection were search hits in SIS and Interpol databases, alterations of Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) (16%), and false documents (6%).

Notably, operational results show a link between motor vehicle crime and document fraud. Along with VIN alterations, criminals used twin cars equipped with false vehicle registration documents and licence plates. Some of the detected vehicles had problems with their supporting documents (insurance, power of attorney, lease or rental contract, etc.), while others had been bought or rented by middlemen using false identity documents. Some market requirements also influenced manipulation attempts, e.g. emission certification, age and origin of the vehicle, etc.

The vehicles were usually driven by one driver using the stolen car as a means of transport. A typical *modus operandi* involves exporting the vehicle immediately after the theft to a neighbouring country or across the EU's external borders, often using false vehicle registration documents and licence plates, or dismantling it into separate parts. Most of the detections at the EU's external
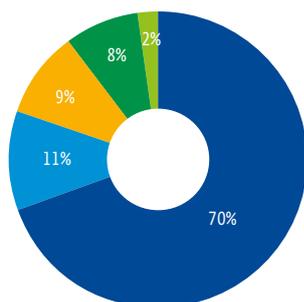
Detections of Stolen Vehicles 2020
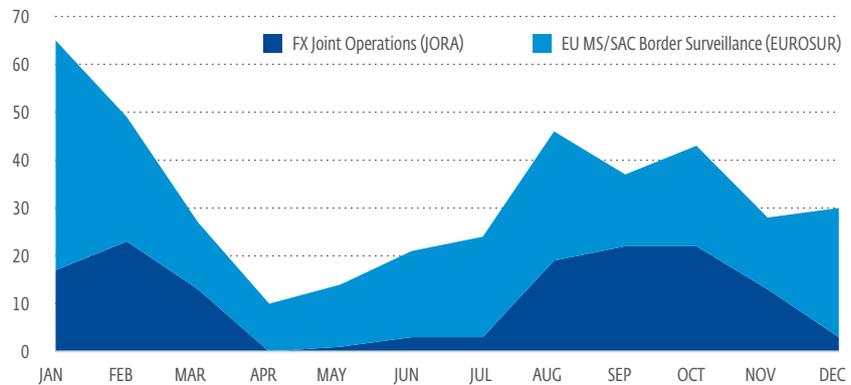
Source: Frontex joint operations data and EUROSUR data as of 15 February 2021
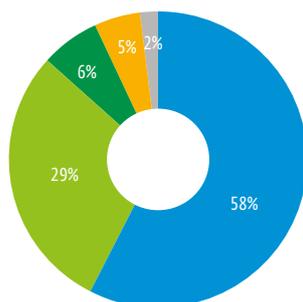
Number of Seized Stolen Vehicles

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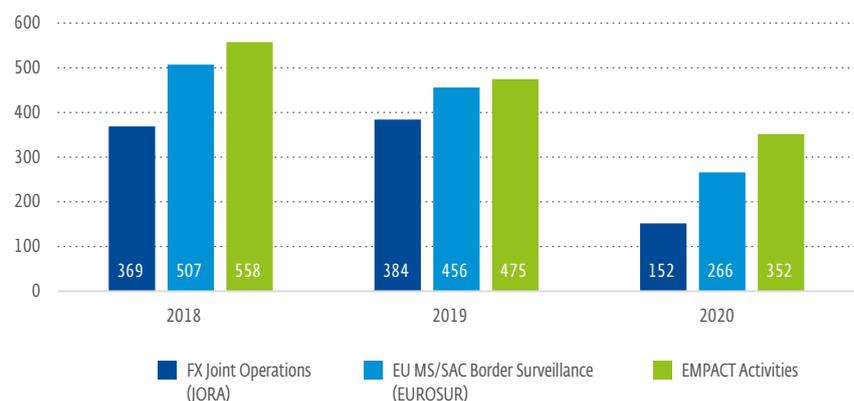
1   Statistics from Frontex-coordinated joint operations (JORA)

Reasons for Detection of Vehicles 2020

- SIS hit — 70%
- Stolen — 11%
- Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) altered — 9%
- Interpol hit — 8%
- False Doc. — 2%

Detections of Stolen Vehicles EU's External Borders

- Eastern Land — 58%
- Balkans — 29%
- Black Sea — 6%
- North Sea — 5%
- Other — 2%

Source: Frontex joint operations data and EUROSUR data as of 15 February 2021

borders were on exit (61%), which along with the lower rate of reporting, led to a significant drop in inbound smuggling. Land BCPs at the Eastern land borders (58%) and in southeast Europe (29%) were the most preferred locations for exporting stolen vehicles out of the EU towards Eastern Europe, Asia and the Middle East. The big share of seizures at the EU's internal borders (32%) and inland (11%) close to border areas indicates that Europe (mostly southeast and central Europe) is also a big market for stolen vehicles.

While most of the detections were at land borders (87%), some of the stolen vehicles were seized close to seaports in Northern and Western Europe, as well as in the Black Sea region. These seizures related to cars and parts destined for markets in West and North Africa and Eastern Europe. Additionally, cars were transported on platforms, inside semitrailers, or dismantled into parts inside cargo vans. These attempts would increase in times of impeded movement of persons.

The dismantling and distribution of stolen vehicle parts in EU Member States and in third countries is a lucrative criminal business. Criminals often steel parts from popular vehicle makes and models, which made them very difficult to trace. Expensive electronic equipment

(e.g. navigation systems, trip recorders, ECUs, etc.) also attracted perpetrators who sought high-profit margins. On occasion, stolen vehicles were dismantled into parts purely for transportation across borders and afterwards reassembled in the destination country.

The distribution of fake and substandard vehicle spare parts especially online is a particular *modus operandi* with a growing influence on the spare parts market. Usually, the substandard parts originate from countries outside the EU and are repackaged in the EU using fake packaging and false quality markings.

6.6 Border Guards' Workload and Air Borders

Compared to 2019, one may imagine that 2020 would have been a year of reduced workload for the border guarding community: Passenger flow at the external borders dropped to less than one third of the total for 2019. After passenger flow fell to its COVID-19 low in April, traffic at the land borders rebounded the quickest, despite remaining far below 2019 figures. In absolute terms, air traffic showed the biggest drop in passengers. Whereas in previous years, marginally more passengers crossed the air borders, in 2020 slightly more passengers crossed the land borders. Finally, the sea borders saw the strongest relative decline in passenger flow, probably driven by the restrictions on ferries and cruise lines.

It would be a premature conclusion, however, to say that 2020 was a calm year. Passenger flow figures fail to capture the full workload of border guards. The more immediate reason why 2020 was a more difficult year than it may seem is one of statistics: Passenger flows are reported for the external borders, but in 2020 the reintroduction of *internal* border checks on account of the pandemic suddenly consumed substantial human resources. This of course widely differed across Member States according to their adopted measures, the geographies of their borders and the amount of cross-border traffic. On the other hand, border guard authorities faced a human resource shortage (caused by the large numbers of personnel on sick leave or quarantined) in the context of a more complex operational environment: Although the number of passengers shrank, the complexity of procedures at the border, including measures to prevent the spread of the corona virus, increased. This is reflected in refusals of entry, where refusals recorded in category I (which includes refusals on health grounds) multiplied in 2020.

As regards the second line at border-crossing points, while refusals of entry overall fell in line with the passenger flow, detections of illegal stay on exit even increased compared with 2019 due to a strong increase of illegal stay detections at the land borders.

The steep drop in traffic flows in 2020 temporarily reduced the need for staff at many BCPs; however, when the traffic rebounds, several Member States will likely again face the challenge of inadequate staffing. In the future, flexible deployments of the EBCG standing corps could alleviate such challenges.

Air Borders

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an overall decrease of around 60% in European air traffic from March 2020 until the end of the year. A small recovery in the summer was only temporary, as large-scale global travel restrictions were reintroduced following the resurgence of the pandemic.

It was therefore inevitable that there was a decrease in the number of irregular migrants at external EU MS/SAC air borders as well as intra EU MS/SAC ones. Both asylum applications and refusals of entry decreased dramatically.

However, 2020 can be regarded as an anomaly, as the previous three years recorded year-on-year increases in irregular migration at air borders.

Overall asylum applications fell drastically from 17 598 in 2019 to 4 029 in 2020. Likewise, refusals of entry fell from 64 928 to 31 064. Moreover, a total of 5 350 fraudulent or fraudulently obtained documents were encountered at the external air borders, a decrease of 50% compared with 2019.
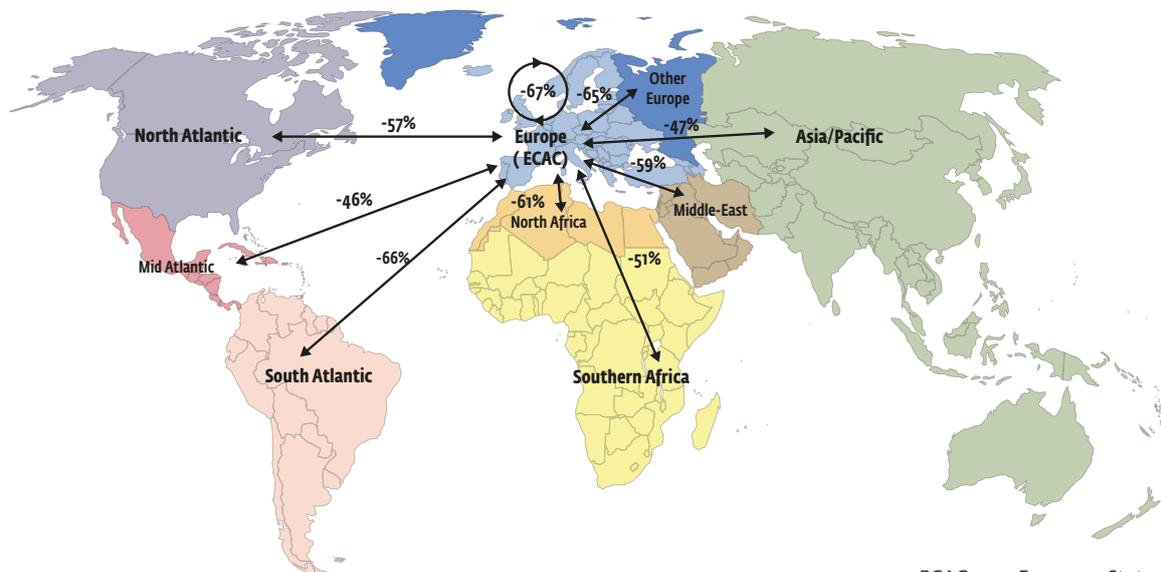
In 2020, 3 808 migrants were detected with fraudulent documents seeking to board intra-Schengen flights. Of
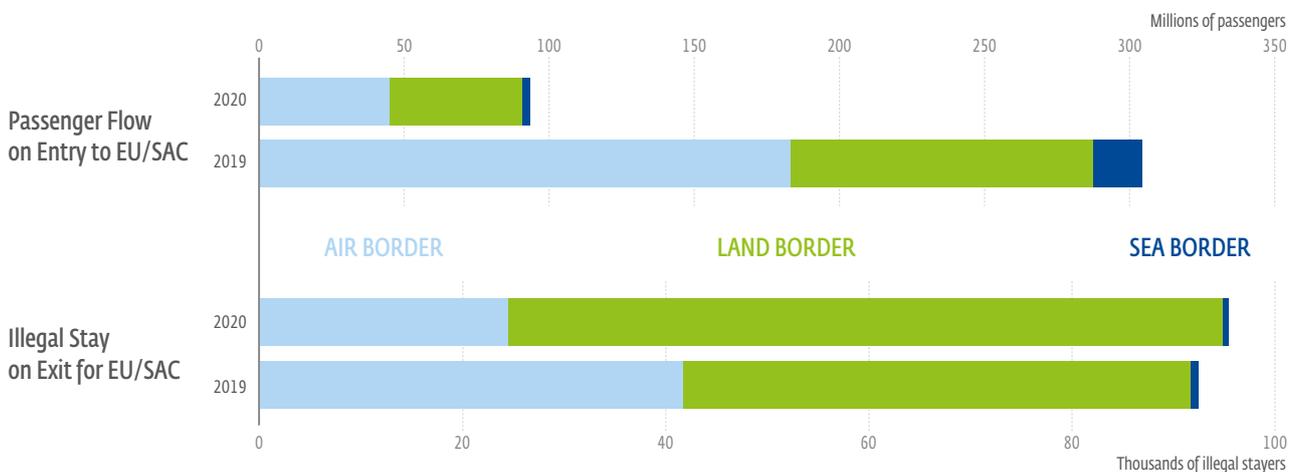
Source: FRAN data as of 15 February 2021

Traffic evolution between worldwide regions
13-01-2021 vs. 16-01-2019

ECAC = 44 European States
Source © EUROCONTROL

these, a further 831 arrived at their intended Schengen destination and usually claimed asylum. This compares with 5 620 and 964 respectively in 2019.

Few major changes in trends or *modi operandi* were identified in 2020. Migrants continued to use the transit without visa concession, with some 736 claiming asylum in 2020. This, however, is down on the 1 819 that claimed asylum in 2019. Most applications were predictably made at the larger EU airports linked with national carriers with wide global networks. Madrid (MAD), with its high connectivity to South America, had the highest number. This is because many South American countries have liberal visa and entry requirements that make them favourable transit countries for migrants seeking to travel to an EU MS/SAC.

In line with the contraction in air traffic, the number of Turkish asylum seekers also decreased. However, their share of the total still remained high.

The number of asylum applications from Venezuelans, which has remained high over the last two years, also declined, as did the number of Venezuelan in-country asylum applications.

Brazilian, Albanian, Georgian and Ukrainian nationals continued to be the top-ranking nationalities refused entry.

Most are believed to have been seeking to enter EU MS/SAC to work illegally.

Migrants, predominantly Albanian nationals, continued to seek to enter the UK and Ireland from EU MS/SAC airports using fraudulent documentation. Many practiced document swapping in non-Schengen lounges by checking in with their genuine passports for a return flight to their home country, and then used self-printed boarding passes to board a flight to the UK or Ireland with fraudulent EU MS/SAC passports or ID cards with the same identities as on the boarding passes. For many airports in EU MS/SAC, the identification of such migrants on exit to the UK and Ireland constitutes the vast majority of cases of fraudulent documentation that they encounter. In 2019, there were 4 597 such cases, while in 2020 the figure was 2 019.

There is evidence that migrants seek to use specific third-country airports close to EU MS/SAC land borders to illegally travel onwards to EU MS/SAC over the green borders. These include Belgrade (BEG), Sarajevo (SJJ) and Kyiv (KBP). Indian, Iraqi, Tunisian and Turkish migrants have been identified using such routes.

Some economic migrants have been identified avoiding COVID-19 quarantine

requirements by chartering flights in groups to fly to a third country airport close to MS/SAC external borders. They then use pre-arranged charted coaches to cross MS/SAC land borders at BCPs thereby utilising the current EU land transit provisions that permit them to travel to their final destination. This arrangement obviates the requirement for these migrants to have to quarantine, something they would have had to do if they had flown directly to their final destination. These migrants want to avoid quarantine as they wish to start working illegally as soon as possible. Also it is unlikely that they would have sponsors prepared to accommodate them for extended periods of self-isolation. Moldovan nationals have been identified in such groups of over 200 at a time, seeking to fly to Turkey, Albania and North Macedonia and then seeking to cross EU MS/SAC land borders before traveling onwards to their final destination.

7. Outlook

It is probable that COVID-19 will continue to significantly affect European integrated border management for much of 2021. Cross-border crime and terrorism, as well as the progressive impact of megatrends, will influence it in major ways. The introduction of new European policies may contribute to more effectively confronting the many challenges ahead.

In the **short term**, COVID-19 will continue to affect travel across the EU's external borders. Vaccine production and distribution, as well as the vaccination process itself, will compound the ambiguities of pandemic management efforts:

- The emergence of more resilient, infectious coronavirus **variants** has **made the path to recovery uncertain**;

- **False vaccination certificates**, the possibility of a rise in the **smuggling of genuine, counterfeit or deteriorated vaccines** and **COVID-19-related medical supplies and/or PPE** may put additional pressure on border management authorities;
- **Geographic fault lines between the vaccine haves and have-nots** are likely to re-shape migratory routes and/or affect traveller flows.

The decreased trend of international travel is expected to continue, encouraging migrants to use mixed routes to reach the EU, particularly from countries with the worst economic problems. Irregular migration via air routes will be strictly linked to the resumption of air traffic and the economic situation in third countries.

Organised crime groups will continue to operate at the EU's external borders, adapting their *modi operandi* to the changes in EU border controls. Pandemic measures in third countries (of origin as well as transit) will continue to restrict people's movements, and inadvertently contribute to the **creation of a complex network of routes both within and outside familiar routes of irregular migration**, as observed in the Canary Islands.

Geography is a key determinant, as the lifting of one country's restrictions may result in an immediate, significant resumption of migrant smuggling. Prolonged lockdowns in other transit countries may encourage re-routing. Of those arriving to European shores, a subset of asylum seekers may try to misuse the mechanism to the detriment of bona

fide applicants, as the underlying incentive structure remains unchanged.

Critical health risks in countries of origin will hamper returns, acting as an additional pull factor.

All considered, the potential shifts in routings combined with the possible scale and vigour of movements may require the swift redeployment of border and coast guards. Towards that end, the EBCG standing corps represents a valuable resource for Member States.

In the **medium term**, the impact of migration, cross-border crime and terrorism will continue to require effective border management as a key tool for the mitigation of security threats in the EU. However, the effectiveness of border management will continue to depend on whole-of-sector and whole-of-government approaches where needed, as border and coast guards are just one part of a sustainable response to cross-border security threats. The following likely scenarios will therefore require a holistic approach to reduce their impact:

- **Increasing social inequalities and asymmetrical economic recoveries** worldwide will likely **contribute to an increase in cross-border criminality** on the EU's external borders;
- After the lifting of internal border controls and the relaxation of prophylactic measures at the borders, **organised crime groups (OCGs) might revert to** *modi operandi* **used in the pre-crisis period**;
- The prolongation in economic downturns in certain countries of origin and transit might act as a strong push factor for international migration;
- The demand for smuggled goods in the EU will likely remain high in the post-pandemic period;
- The smuggling of fake (COVID-19-related) medical products may persist as long as there is demand for vaccines and medicines in global and European markets;

- The **reactivation of traditional air routes will most likely lead to increased migratory flows**, as it will ease travel, reduce cost and decrease uncertainty. Air traffic trends will likely return to pre-pandemic levels at least in the next two years, although this will depend on the recovery of the air transport industry and the progress of vaccination programmes;
- Border controls might include in the future checks of vaccination certificates in order to allow unrestricted international travel.

European border management will hence face less erratic flows than in the short term. While migratory movements may have a more regular pattern, they may also be of increased magnitude, warranting increased resources put to more effective use.

The **lifting of internal border controls** will likely lead to a return to pre-pandemic levels of intra-Schengen movements as a proportion of overall arrivals to the Schengen area.

On the policy side, the European Pact on Migration and Asylum, together with the progressive implementation of the EBCG Regulation (including the deployment of the EBCG standing corps), as well as the introduction of new external borders control systems, are expected to enhance European integrated border management. In particular, improved cooperation at European and national level, together with the operational deployment of ETIAS and EES, will **boost the effectiveness of EU border management** significantly, including with regard to the fight against organised crime and terrorism. The implementation of the interoperability mechanism in the framework of an integrated and modern migration and border management system, with an enhanced Eurodac database and a new compulsory pre-entry screening system, will disrupt the activities of criminal groups that supply

false documents and facilitate illegal border-crossings.

In the **long term**, the megatrends relevant to integrated border management will inform the scenarios that the EU must take into account. However, recent strategic foresight indicates that lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic could influence megatrends for the next decade. These developments need to be closely monitored, as they may have extensive implications for EU border management. This will require a continued **strategic approach to the monitoring and identification of future threats and challenges to assess and understand the global risk environment** with the purpose of informing policy and operational responses that pertain to EIBM.

8. Statistical annex

Annex Table 1. **Illegal border-crossing between BCPs, on entry**

Detections at the external borders by Member State, border type, gender and age group

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Share of total	% change on prev. year	Highest share
Border Type							**Nationality**
Sea	176 211	113 643	106 246	**86 270**	69	-19	Morocco (19%)
Land	28 539	35 474	35 600	**38 956**	31	9.4	Syria (48%)
Gender							**Nationality**
Female	:	28 547	32 987	**10 467**	8.4	-68	Syria (18%)
Male	:	113 770	106 690	**108 372**	87	1.6	Syria (18%)
Not available	204 750	6 800	2 169	**6 387**	5.1	194	Tunisia (30%)
Age Group☼							**Nationality**
Adult	146 736	114 183	96 947	**85 065**	68	-12	Morocco (19%)
Minor	32 443	30 948	32 554	**15 004**	12	-54	Afghanistan (14%)
Not available	32 443	26 430	4 009	**3 444**	2.8	-14	Unspec. sub-Saharan nationals (39%)
Unaccompanied	:	3 753	5 003	**5 611**	4.5	12	Tunisia (27%)
Accompanied	:	765	23 542	**5 949**	4.8	-75	Afghanistan (30%)
Not available	25 571	3 986	12 345	**25 157**	20	104	Syria (65%)
Total	**204 750**	**149 117**	**141 846**	**125 226**	**100**	**-12**	

Annex Table 2. **Illegal border-crossing between BCPs, on entry**

Detections reported by border type and top ten nationalities at the external borders

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Share of total	% change on prev. year
All Borders						
Syria	19 452	14 378	24 339	**21 581**	17	-11
Morocco	11 279	13 498	8 020	**17 121**	14	113
Algeria	7 443	6 101	5 314	**13 247**	11	149
Tunisia	6 520	5 230	2 799	**13 191**	11	371
Unspecified sub-Saharan nationals	0	69	14 346	**12 628**	10	-12
Afghanistan	7 576	12 666	34 154	**10 089**	8.1	-70
Bangladesh	9 384	2 043	2 254	**5 414**	4.3	140
Turkey	2 957	8 412	7 880	**3 947**	3.2	-50
Pakistan	10 015	4 988	3 799	**2 603**	2.1	-31
Côte d'Ivoire	13 085	5 269	1 500	**2 225**	1.8	48
All Other	117 039	76 463	37 441	**23 180**	19	-38
Total all borders	**204 750**	**149 117**	**141 846**	**125 226**	**100**	**-12**
Land Border						
Syria	3 122	6 083	7 546	**18 697**	48	148
Afghanistan	3 684	2 863	5 812	**5 746**	15	-1.1
Turkey	2 648	7 954	7 322	**3 709**	9.5	-49
Albania	6 502	4 576	2 055	**1 429**	3.7	-30
Pakistan	5 281	2 883	2 109	**1 071**	2.7	-49
Iraq	1 778	3 348	2 256	**977**	2.5	-57
Bangladesh	260	855	1 386	**887**	2.3	-36
Palestine*	104	480	379	**692**	1.8	83
Morocco	89	112	197	**668**	1.7	239
Libya	92	102	85	**637**	1.6	649
All Other	4 979	6 218	6 453	**4 443**	11	-31
Total land borders	**28 539**	**35 474**	**35 600**	**38 956**	**100**	**9.4**
Sea Border						
Morocco	11 190	13 386	7 823	**16 453**	19	110
Tunisia	6 489	5 204	2 699	**12 994**	15	381
Algeria	7 194	5 943	5 089	**12 979**	15	155
Unspecified sub-Saharan nationals	0	69	14 191	**12 627**	15	-11
Bangladesh	9 124	1 188	868	**4 527**	5.2	422
Afghanistan	3 892	9 803	28 342	**4 343**	5	-85
Syria	16 330	8 295	16 793	**2 884**	3.3	-83
Côte d'Ivoire	12 931	5 219	1 462	**2 198**	2.5	50
Sudan	6 319	2 123	1 886	**1 811**	2.1	-4
Somalia	3 106	1 194	3 049	**1 797**	2.1	-41
All Other	99 636	61 219	24 044	**13 657**	16	-43
Total sea borders	**176 211**	**113 643**	**106 246**	**86 270**	**100**	**-19**

* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

Annex Table 3. **Illegal border-crossing between BCPs, on entry**

Detections reported by routes and top three nationalities at the external borders

Routes	2017	2018	2019	2020	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Central Mediterranean Route	**118 962**	**23 485**	**14 003**	**35 673**	**28**	**155**
Tunisia	6 415	5 182	2 690	12 985	36	383
Bangladesh	9 009	583	750	4 447	12	493
Côte d'Ivoire	9 509	1 191	1 304	2 065	5.8	58
All Other	94 029	16 529	9 259	16 176	45	75
Western Balkan Route	**12 179**	**5 869**	**15 152**	**26 969**	**22**	**78**
Syria	634	323	4 643	16 644	62	258
Afghanistan	3 388	1 669	5 338	5 251	19	-1.6
Iraq	960	300	1 498	749	2.8	-50
All Other	7 197	3 577	3 673	4 325	16	18
Western African Route	**421**	**1 323**	**2 718**	**23 029**	**18**	**747**
Morocco	106	902	949	11 759	51	n.a.
Unspecified sub-Saharan nationals	0	0	1 709	10 620	46	521
Mali	1	11	48	290	1.3	504
All Other	314	410	12	360	1.6	n.a.
Eastern Mediterranean Route	**42 319**	**56 561**	**83 333**	**20 283**	**16**	**-76**
Sea	**34 732**	**34 014**	**65 963**	**10 434**	**51**	**-84**
Afghanistan	3 713	9 597	28 273	3 422	33	-88
Syria	13 957	8 173	16 707	2 638	25	-84
Somalia	243	737	2 630	777	7.4	-70
All Other	16 819	15 507	18 353	3 597	34	-80
Land	**7 587**	**22 547**	**17 370**	**9 849**	**49**	**-43**
Turkey	2 220	7 468	6 619	3 486	35	-47
Syria	2 438	5 733	2 897	2 031	21	-30
Pakistan	901	1 823	1 556	771	7.8	-50
All Other	2 028	7 523	6 298	3 561	36	-43
Western Mediterranean Route	**23 063**	**56 245**	**23 969**	**17 228**	**14**	**-28**
Sea	**21 552**	**54 820**	**23 557**	**17 132**	**99**	**-27**
Algeria	4 287	4 339	4 007	11 455	67	186
Morocco	4 704	11 881	6 336	3 521	21	-44
Unspecified sub-Saharan nationals	.	69	12 482	2 007	12	-84
All Other	12 561	38 531	732	149	0.9	-80
Land	**1 511**	**1 425**	**412**	**96**	**0.6**	**-77**
Mali	6	216	102	62	65	-39
Burkina Faso	109	245	34	8	8.3	-76
Morocco	0	0	0	7	7.3	n.a.
All Other	1 396	964	276	19	20	-93
Circular Route from Albania to Greece	**6 396**	**4 550**	**1 944**	**1 365**	**1.1**	**-30**
Albania	6 220	4 319	1 867	1 326	97	-29
Iraq	14	17	5	13	1	160
All Other	154	208	68	20	1.5	-71
Eastern Borders Route	**872**	**1 084**	**722**	**677**	**0.5**	**-6.2**
Russia	69	84	56	109	16	95
Turkey	47	76	77	67	9.9	-13
Ukraine	105	75	57	54	8	-5.3
All Other	651	849	532	447	66	-16
Black Sea Route	**537**	**0**	**2**	**0**	*n.a.*	*n.a.*
Other	**1**	**0**	**3**	**2**	*0*	*-33*
Total	**204 750**	**149 117**	**141 846**	**125 226**	**100**	**-12**

Annex Table 4. **Clandestine entries at land and sea BCPs**

Detections reported by Member State, border type, age group, gender and top ten nationalities

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Share of total	% change on prev. year	Highest share
Border Type							**Nationality**
Land	1 207	1 998	2 119	**1 822**	80	-14	Afghanistan (70%)
Sea	415	260	431	**464**	20	8	Albania (46%)
Age Group							**Nationality**
Adult	604	1 709	2 436	**1 725**	75	-29	Afghanistan (53%)
Minor	53	391	113	**93**	4.1	-18	Tunisia (56%)
Not available	965	158	1	**468**	20	n.a.	Afghanistan (75%)
Gender							**Nationality**
Female	.	145	84	**114**	5	36	Albania (61%)
Male	.	2 101	2 464	**2 169**	95	-12	Afghanistan (59%)
Not available	1 622	12	2	**3**	0.1	50	Iran (67%)
Top Ten Nationalities							
Afghanistan	490	1 041	1 646	**1 275**	56	-23	
Albania	75	31	33	**228**	10	591	
Tunisia	47	59	263	**146**	6.4	-44	
Syria	115	64	51	**134**	5.9	163	
Morocco	48	43	45	**125**	5.5	178	
Pakistan	47	245	69	**60**	2.6	-13	
Turkey	49	65	49	**51**	2.2	4.1	
Kosovo*	7	36	9	**39**	1.7	333	
Iran	32	118	42	**35**	1.5	-17	
Bangladesh	11	84	33	**33**	1.4	0	
All Other	701	472	310	**160**	7	-48	
Total	**1 622**	**2 258**	**2 550**	**2 286**	**100**	**-10**	

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo* declaration of independence.

Annex Table 5. **Facilitators**

Detections reported at the external borders, by Member State, place of detection and top ten nationalities

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Share of total	% change on prev. year	Highest share
Place of Detection							**Nationality**
Inland	4 397	4 958	4 912	**4 657**	52	-5.2	Unknown (12%)
Land	4 197	2 139	1 804	**1 979**	22	9.7	Romania (10%)
Not available	327	3 033	3 765	**1 918**	21	-49	Morocco (23%)
Sea	1 032	402	404	**310**	3.5	-23	Iran (16%)
Air	293	110	104	**78**	0.9	-25	Syria (23%)
Top Ten Nationalities							
Unknown	781	614	488	**698**	7.8	43	
Morocco	804	696	1 039	**604**	6.8	-42	
France	435	655	595	**567**	6.3	-4.7	
Italy	477	439	494	**548**	6.1	11	
Syria	369	522	460	**484**	5.4	5.2	
Iraq	259	295	409	**359**	4	-12	
Albania	650	609	758	**347**	3.9	-54	
Romania	431	176	213	**336**	3.8	58	
Pakistan	370	503	411	**305**	3.4	-26	
Tunisia	139	353	164	**301**	3.4	84	
All Other	5 531	5 780	5 958	**4 393**	49	-26	
Total	**10 246**	**10 642**	**10 989**	**8 942**	**100**	**-19**	

Annex Table 6. **Illegal stay**

Detections reported by Member State, place of detection, age group, gender and top ten nationalities

	2017	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**Share of total**	**% change on prev. year**	**Highest share**
Place of Detection							**Nationality**
Inland	352 750	273 807	307 248	**269 894**	73	-12	*Morocco (11%)*
on Exit	82 329	91 929	92 411	**95 885**	26	3.8	*Ukraine (36%)*
Not available	5	1 530	3 419	**4 395**	1.2	29	*Afghanistan (20%)*
Age Group							**Nationality**
Adult	:	236 900	359 515	**339 959**	92	-5.4	*Ukraine (13%)*
Minor	:	21 052	22 227	**17 980**	4.9	-19	*Afghanistan (22%)*
Not available	435 084	109 314	21 336	**12 235**	3.3	-43	*Algeria (10%)*
Gender							**Nationality**
Female	:	38 957	62 069	**62 415**	17	0.6	*Ukraine (24%)*
Male	:	154 294	247 782	**239 845**	65	-3.2	*Ukraine (13%)*
Not available	435 084	174 015	93 227	**67 914**	18	-27	*Eritrea (18%)*
Top Ten Nationalities							
Ukraine	32 608	36 299	39 759	**46 012**	12	16	
Morocco	29 859	21 891	32 669	**31 992**	8.6	-2.1	
Algeria	19 892	16 383	21 409	**22 613**	6.1	5.6	
Albania	24 801	21 639	24 994	**21 861**	5.9	-13	
Moldova	8 340	9 536	13 990	**20 414**	5.5	46	
Afghanistan	21 177	14 104	15 675	**18 129**	4.9	16	
Syria	12 885	9 248	9 433	**16 167**	4.4	71	
Eritrea	12 995	10 626	14 470	**14 552**	3.9	0.6	
Pakistan	19 624	15 605	19 207	**14 277**	3.9	-26	
Serbia	11 371	10 469	9 597	**13 267**	3.6	38	
All Other	241 532	201 466	201 875	**150 890**	41	-25	
Total	**435 084**	**367 266**	**403 078**	**370 174**	**100**	**-8**	

Annex Table 7. **Refusals of entry**

Refusals of entry at the external borders reported by Member State, border type, age group, gender and top ten nationalities

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Share of total	% change on prev. year	Highest share
Border Type							**Nationality**
Land	126 456	131 641	145 494	**102 448**	78	-30	Ukraine (52%)
Air	48 924	54 952	62 859	**26 208**	20	-58	Ukraine (12%)
Sea	7 192	4 037	4 129	**2 782**	2.1	-33	Albania (33%)
Not available	0	28	5	**1**	0	-80	Brazil (100%)
Age Group							**Nationality**
Adult	:	141 049	175 356	**123 447**	94	-30	Ukraine (45%)
Minor	:	14 757	19 411	**4 999**	3.8	-74	Russia (46%)
Not available	182 572	34 852	17 720	**2 993**	2.3	-83	Russia (22%)
Gender							**Nationality**
Female	:	42 185	53 271	**30 583**	23	-43	Ukraine (45%)
Male	:	105 198	132 998	**92 547**	70	-30	Ukraine (45%)
Not available	182 572	43 275	26 218	**8 309**	6.3	-68	Brazil (17%)
Top Ten nationalities							
Ukraine	37 071	57 576	70 313	**56 005**	43	-20	
Albania	31 861	24 386	21 630	**11 626**	8.8	-46	
Moldova	5 930	6 378	6 174	**8 668**	6.6	40	
Russia	36 335	25 951	34 546	**8 270**	6.3	-76	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3 774	4 142	3 316	**6 672**	5.1	101	
Serbia	7 727	7 658	7 198	**6 321**	4.8	-12	
Belarus	7 660	7 955	7 691	**5 514**	4.2	-28	
Turkey	4 662	4 836	4 767	**3 137**	2.4	-34	
Brazil	3 079	4 973	7 073	**2 436**	1.9	-66	
Georgia	2 601	4 094	5 154	**1 895**	1.4	-63	
All Other	41 872	42 709	44 625	**20 895**	16	-53	
Total	**182 572**	**190 658**	**212 487**	**131 439**	**100**	**-38**	

Annex Table 8. **Reasons for refusals of entry**

Refusals of entry at the external borders reported by reasons for refusal, Member State and top ten nationalities

	Refusal persons Total	Reasons for refusals of entry (see description below)										Reasons Total
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	n.a.	
Top Ten nationalities												
Ukraine	56 005	70	46	1 515	26	29 539	4 223	2 880	4 051	10 065	4 004	56 419
Albania	11 626	72	47	264	10	5 460	970	744	2 629	1 590	131	11 917
Moldova	8 668	13	2	217	17	5 497	635	249	797	1 230	91	8 748
Russia	8 270	39	14	4 320	64	468	81	200	117	1 560	1 604	8 467
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6 672	56	5	94	0	5 688	102	241	260	319	10	6 775
Serbia	6 321	208	59	156	10	2 352	1 379	220	1 129	849	22	6 384
Belarus	5 514	25	3	865	2	773	115	201	134	1 287	2 149	5 554
Turkey	3 137	113	64	1 061	27	383	317	71	129	874	157	3 196
Brazil	2 436	10	8	598	3	826	55	165	83	712	211	2 671
Georgia	1 895	17	5	51	0	689	88	218	525	348	99	2 040
All Other	20 895	2 457	480	3 449	197	4 934	729	1 046	1 150	6 127	2 833	23 402
Total	**131 439**	**3 080**	**733**	**12 590**	**356**	**56 609**	**8 694**	**6 235**	**11 004**	**24 961**	**11 311**	**135 573**

Descriptions of the reasons for refusal of entry:
A   has no valid travel document(s);
B   has a false/counterfeit/forged travel document;
C   has no valid visa or residence permit;
D   has a false/counterfeit/forged visa or residence permit;
E   has no appropriate documentation justifying the purpose and conditions of stay;
F   has already stayed for three months during a six months period on the territory of the Member States of the European Union;
G   does not have sufficient means of subsistence in relation to the period and form of stay, or the means to return to the country of origin or transit;
H   is a person for whom an alert has been issued for the purposes of refusing entry in the SIS or in the national register;
I   is considered to be a threat for public policy, internal security, public health or the international relations of one or more Member States of the European Union;

Annex Table 9. **Persons using fraudulent documents**

Detections on entry at the external borders, by Member State, border type and top ten nationalities

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Share of total	% change on prev. year	Highest share
Border Type							**Nationality Reported**
Land	1 870	1 324	1 085	**2 077**	55	92	*Ukraine (57%)*
Air	3 147	3 131	3 450	**1 466**	40	-57	*Unknown (13%)*
Sea	669	848	693	**176**	4.8	-74	*Morocco (88%)*
Top Ten Nationalities							
Ukraine	787	392	249	**1 258**	34	405	
Turkey	251	286	402	**264**	7.1	-34	
Unknown	257	313	244	**198**	5.3	-19	
Morocco	856	900	746	**196**	5.3	-73	
Russia	269	224	119	**172**	4.6	45	
Moldova	82	56	99	**166**	4.5	69	
Kosovo*	103	99	155	**92**	2.5	-41	
Albania	199	113	145	**77**	2.1	-47	
Syria	176	139	131	**75**	2	-43	
Serbia	76	71	64	**75**	2	17	
All Other	2 630	2 710	2 874	**1 146**	31	-60	
Total	**5 686**	**5 303**	**5 228**	**3 719**	**100**	**-29**	

Note: Data are not available for December 2020 from France, Lithuania, Romania and Spain.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo* declaration of independence.

Annex Table 10. **Fraudulent documents used**

Detections on entry at the external borders, by country of issuance of the document and type of document

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Share of total	% change on prev. year	Highest share
Country of issuance							**Type of Document**
Poland	795	433	286	**1 455**	31	409	Other (85%)
France	633	581	720	**372**	7.9	-48	Passport (35%)
Spain	926	1 037	895	**310**	6.6	-65	Id Card (38%)
Germany	460	374	439	**254**	5.4	-42	Residence Permit (42%)
Italy	736	574	616	**215**	4.5	-65	Residence Permit (27%)
Hungary	123	115	101	**169**	3.6	67	Border Stamp (93%)
Belgium	204	192	186	**141**	3	-24	Residence Permit (31%)
Greece	254	211	192	**130**	2.8	-32	Passport (31%)
Ukraine	56	47	46	**97**	2.1	111	Passport (57%)
Turkey	118	228	242	**92**	1.9	-62	Other (81%)
All Other	2 888	2 837	2 877	**1 491**	32	-48	Passport (41%)
Type of Document							**Type of Fraud**
Other	234	184	164	**1 550**	33	845	Counterfeit (95%)
Passport	2 235	2 374	2 691	**988**	21	-63	Impostor (44%)
Border Stamp	1 049	810	699	**730**	15	4	Counterfeit (93%)
Residence Permit	944	904	855	**517**	11	-40	Counterfeit (54%)
ID Card	1 093	1 126	1 041	**487**	10	-53	Counterfeit (54%)
Visa	1 638	1 231	1 150	**454**	10	-61	Fraudulently obtained (52%)
Total	**7 193**	**6 629**	**6 600**	**4 726**	**100**	**-28**	

Note: Data are not available for December 2020 from France, Lithuania, Romania and Spain.

Annex Table 11. **Return decisions issued**

Decisions issued by Member State, age group, gender and top ten nationalities

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Share of total	% change on prev. year	Highest share
Age Group							**Nationality**
Adult	:	170 159	154 894	**245 923**	78	59	*Albania (9%)*
Minor	:	10 096	9 741	**18 678**	6	92	*Afghanistan (11%)*
Not available	282 075	125 727	137 388	**51 539**	16	-62	*Algeria (24%)*
Gender							**Nationality**
Male	:	205 064	204 824	**248 783**	79	23	*Morocco (9%)*
Female	:	48 346	49 738	**61 523**	20	26	*Ukraine (9%)*
Not available	282 075	52 572	47 461	**5 834**	1.8	-88	*Brazil (29%)*
Top Ten Nationalities							
Morocco	22 028	22 151	23 553	**24 764**	7.9	7	
Albania	18 015	17 273	17 272	**23 581**	7.4	38	
Afghanistan	18 686	18 969	18 516	**21 665**	6.9	19	
Ukraine	29 303	33 903	33 406	**20 449**	6.4	-38	
Pakistan	14 281	14 458	17 086	**19 480**	6.1	15	
Algeria	9 691	11 375	12 727	**18 983**	6	51	
Syria	8 963	7 559	13 590	**14 936**	4.7	11	
Turkey	4 508	6 207	7 553	**11 291**	3.6	51	
Iraq	19 316	16 816	13 272	**9 715**	3.1	-25	
Tunisia	8 166	6 262	4 355	**8 542**	2.7	98	
All Other	129 118	151 009	140 693	**142 734**	45	3	
Total	**282 075**	**305 982**	**302 023**	**316 140**	**100**	**6.1**	

Note: Data for December 2020 are not available from Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Poland. Data from Slovenia are not available from January to October 2020.

Annex Table 12. **Effective returns**

People effectively returned to third countries by Member State, age group, gender and top ten nationalities

	2017	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**Share of total**	**% change on prev. year**	**Highest share**
Age Group							**Nationality**
Adult	.	76 380	96 053	**53 141**	80	-44	Ukraine (20%)
Minor	.	2 963	5 411	**5 141**	7.8	-3.3	Albania (12%)
Not available	155 945	68 472	37 913	**8 232**	12	-78	Morocco (20%)
Gender							**Nationality**
Male	.	56 958	75 211	**50 417**	76	-32	Ukraine (15%)
Female	.	16 259	21 374	**15 532**	23	-27	Ukraine (21%)
Not available	155 945	74 598	42 792	**565**	0.8	-99	Brazil (55%)
Top Ten Nationalities							
Ukraine	24 614	27 264	26 594	**10 985**	16	-59	
Albania	25 790	19 243	15 629	**7 686**	12	-50	
Georgia	3 446	5 021	7 344	**4 274**	6.4	-41	
Serbia	4 496	3 548	3 261	**3 158**	4.8	-1.7	
Moldova	3 415	3 531	4 027	**2 470**	3.7	-38	
Tunisia	3 653	3 854	3 564	**2 416**	3.6	-32	
Morocco	10 047	10 858	9 647	**2 403**	3.6	-75	
Russia	4 573	4 628	4 820	**2 093**	3.2	-56	
Pakistan	6 655	4 305	2 984	**1 969**	2.9	-34	
Turkey	1 925	2 451	2 887	**1 884**	2.8	-34	
All Other	67 331	63 112	58 620	**27 176**	41	-53	
Total	**155 945**	**147 815**	**139 377**	**66 514**	**100**	**-52**	

Note: Data for December 2020 are not available from Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Poland. Data from Denmark are not available from August 2020. Data from Slovenia are not available from January to October 2020.

Annex Table 13. **Effective returns by type of return**

People effectively returned to third countries by type of return and top ten nationalities

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Share of total	% change on prev. year	Highest share
Type of Return							**Nationality**
Forced return	**79 606**	**75 030**	**71 672**	**26 082**	**39**	**-64**	**Albania (18%)**
Not applicable	:	:	:	26 082	100	n.a.	Albania (18%)
Enforced by Member State	59 684	54 015	50 614	:	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Not available	16 565	18 741	17 218	:	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Enforced by Joint Operation	3 357	2 274	3 840	:	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Voluntary return	**76 013**	**72 773**	**67 656**	**39 100**	**59**	**-41**	**Ukraine (23%)**
Without assistance	:	33 335	34 342	28 079	71	-18	Ukraine (28%)
Not applicable	:	:	:	11 021	29	n.a.	Georgia (11%)
IOM Assisted	18 037	1 538	22	:	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Not available	3 996	27 556	22 223	:	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Others	53 980	8 442	4 758	:	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
AVRR	:	237	4 179	:	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
AVR	:	1 665	2 132	:	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Not available	**326**	**12**	**49**	**1 332**	**2**	**2 618**	**Albania (27%)**
Total	**155 945**	**147 815**	**139 377**	**66 514**	**100**	**-52**	

TOP TEN NATIONALITIES

Forced

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Share of total	% change on prev. year	
Albania	21 738	16 341	12 505	**4 764**	18	-62	
Tunisia	3 403	3 545	3 347	**2 231**	8.5	-33	
Morocco	8 936	9 977	9 074	**2 096**	8	-77	
Ukraine	2 249	2 635	2 542	**2 006**	7.7	-21	
Georgia	1 524	2 290	3 514	**1 688**	6.5	-52	
Serbia	3 155	2 594	2 126	**1 442**	5.5	-32	
Moldova	1 280	1 092	1 848	**1 060**	4.1	-42	
Turkey	1 070	1 478	1 342	**920**	3.5	-31	
Algeria	3 410	4 044	4 579	**901**	3.4	-80	
Pakistan	2 112	1 434	1 168	**704**	2.7	-40	
All Other	30 729	29 600	29 627	**8 270**	32	-72	
Total Forced Returns	**79 606**	**75 030**	**71 672**	**26 082**	**100**	**-64**	

Voluntary

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Share of total	% change on prev. year	
Ukraine	22 362	24 629	24 052	**8 963**	23	-63	
Albania	3 984	2 901	3 095	**2 559**	6.6	-16	
Georgia	1 904	2 731	3 824	**2 515**	6.4	-34	
Russia	3 057	2 946	3 040	**1 586**	4.1	-48	
Serbia	1 340	954	1 135	**1 573**	4.1	39	
Moldova	2 135	2 439	2 179	**1 399**	3.6	-34	
Brazil	1 322	1 153	1 118	**1 370**	3.6	26	
Pakistan	4 543	2 871	1 816	**1 257**	3.2	-30	
Iraq	4 635	3 945	2 667	**1 237**	3.2	-53	
Colombia	401	441	699	**1 233**	3.1	78	
All Other	30 330	27 763	24 031	**15 408**	40	-35	
Total Voluntary Returns	**76 013**	**72 773**	**67 656**	**39 100**	**100**	**-42**	

Annex Table 14. **Passenger flow on entry**

Data reported (on voluntary basis) by Member State, border type and top ten nationalities

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Share of total	% change on prev. year	Highest share
Border Type							**Nationality**
Land	111 447 809	101 249 852	104 334 084	45 659 299	49	-56	Croatia (16%)
Air	179 475 434	184 938 297	183 234 297	45 066 379	48	-75	Unknown (68%)
Sea	34 126 990	18 912 570	16 752 610	2 540 549	2.7	-85	Unknown (50%)
Groups of nationalities							
EU MS/SAC	71 220 539	89 587 420	89 644 947	32 612 570	35	-64	
Third-country	62 193 128	65 199 712	64 260 921	20 902 076	22	-67	
Not specified	191 636 566	150 313 587	150 415 123	39 751 581	43	-73	
Total	**325 050 233**	**305 100 719**	**304 320 991**	**93 266 227**	**100**	**-69**	

Notes on FRAN data sources and methods

The term 'Member States' refers to FRAN Member States, which includes the 27 Member States and three Schengen Associated Countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland). For the data concerning detections at the external borders of the EU, some of the border types are not applicable to all FRAN Member States. This pertains to data on all FRAN indicators since the data are provided disaggregated by border type. The definitions of detections at land borders are therefore not applicable (excluding borders with non-Schengen principalities) for Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. For Cyprus, reported detections along the Green Line are linked to arrivals of migrants by sea or air in the areas where the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control. The Green Line does not constitute an external border of the EU according to

Council Regulation EC No. 866/2004. For sea borders, the definitions are not applicable for land-locked Member States including Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Luxembourg, Slovakia and Switzerland.

In addition, data on detections of illegal border-crossing at land, air and sea BCPs (1B) are not available for Iceland, Ireland and Spain, and in Greece these detections are included in the data for indicator 1A.

Data on detections of illegal border-crossing between sea BCPs (1A) are not available for Ireland. For 2013, data from Slovenia include detections at the EU external borders only until June 2013.

Data on apprehension (FRAN Indicator 2) of facilitators are not available for Ireland and UK. For Italy, the data are not disaggregated by border type, but are reported as total apprehensions (not specified). Data for Italy and Norway also include the facilitation of illegal stay and work. For Romania, the data

include land Intra-EU detections on exit at the border with Hungary.

For the data concerning detections of illegal stay (FRAN Indicator 3), data on detections on exit are not available for Ireland, Italy and the UK. Data on detections of illegal stay inland have not been available from the Netherlands since 2012.

Data on refusals of entry (FRAN Indicator 4) at the external EU borders are not disaggregated by reason of refusal for Ireland and the UK.

The data on passenger flow (shared on voluntary basis) are not available for Austria, Ireland, Sweden and the UK. Data on passenger flow at the air border are not available according to the definition for Spain. Data at the sea border are not available for Cyprus, Malta, Spain, the Netherlands, Romania and Denmark.

For all indicators, data from Croatia are available only starting with July 2013.

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