

Western Balkans Quarterly

QUARTER 3 • JULY–SEPTEMBER 2017

Q1

Q2

Q3

Q4





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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.

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List of abbreviations used

BCP	border-crossing point
CIA	Central Investigation Agency
EDF	European Union Document-Fraud
EU	European Union
FRAN	Frontex Risk Analysis Network
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ID	identification document
n.a.	not available
Q/Qtr	quarter of the year
RAU	Frontex Risk Analysis Unit
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WB	Western Balkans
WB-RAN	Western Balkans Risk Analysis Network

Introduction

Concept

The Western Balkans Risk Analysis Network (WB-RAN) performs monthly exchanges of statistical data and information on the most recent irregular migration developments affecting the region. This information is compiled at Frontex Risk Analysis Unit (RAU) level and analysed in cooperation with the regional partners on a quarterly and annual basis. The annual reports offer a more in-depth analysis of the developments and phenomena which impact the regional and common borders, while the quarterly reports are meant to provide regular updates and identify emerging trends in order to maintain situational awareness. Both types of reports are aimed at offering support for strategic and operational decision making.

Methodology

The Western Balkans Quarterly is focused on quarterly developments as reflected by the seven key indicators of irregular migration: (1) detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs, (2) detections of illegal border-crossing at BCPs, (3) refusals of entry, (4) detections of illegal stay, (5) asylum applications, (6) detections of facilitators, and (7) detections of fraudulent documents¹.

The data presented in the overview are derived from monthly statistics provided

within the framework of the WB-RAN and reference-period statistics from common border sections of neighbouring EU Member States (Croatia, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary and Romania). In addition, the Western Balkans Quarterly is drawing from FRAN Quarterly reports and also from data analysed in the framework of other risk analysis networks (FRAN, EDF).

Structure

The first part offers a general situational overview broken down by main areas of work of border-control authorities and police activities related to irregular migration and cross-border criminality (firearms smuggling). The second part presents more in-depth featured risk analyses of particular phenomena. The current issue of the Western Balkans Quarterly is the tenth following a new approach adopted for risk analysis quarterlies. Nonetheless, the structure of the report may still be subject to some readjustments.

Changes in data scope after Croatia's entry to the EU

Important changes in the collection and use of data for Western Balkans Quarterlies were introduced upon Croatia's joining the EU in July 2013. Firstly, data for Slovenia, which now has no external borders with non-EU Western Balkan countries, have not been included in the report since

the third quarter of 2013. Slovenian historical data were also excluded from the tables in order to make the comparison with previous quarters analytically meaningful.

Secondly, as the Croatian-Hungarian and Croatian-Slovenian border sections are now internal EU-borders and so they are no longer covered by this report.

Thirdly, after joining the EU, Croatian data on illegal stay are limited to detections at the border. More precisely, Croatia's illegal stay data only include cases detected on exit, while inland detections are not included. The analysis of the illegal stay indicator takes this fact into consideration.

Changes in data scope after Kosovo's entry to the WB-RAN

Starting from the first quarter of 2014, data from Kosovo* on key indicators of irregular migration have been included in the reporting, making it possible to get a more comprehensive picture of the irregular movements in the region. However, as there are no historical data available for Kosovo*, the new data have some impact on the comparison of the examined period with previous quarters. When necessary for analytical purposes, some comparison can be made also excluding data from Kosovo*, which is noted in the text.

¹ Please note that the analysis of this indicator is now limited to WB-RAN countries only, given that EU Member States have transitioned to the European Union Document-Fraud (EDF) reporting scheme.

I. SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW

Figure 1. General map of the Western Balkans region



Summary of WB-RAN indicators

Table 1. Overview of indicators

WB-RAN Indicator	Q3 2016	Q2 2017	Q3 2017	% change on same quarter last year	% change on previous quarter
Illegal border-crossing between BCPs	14 544	5 384	7 371	-49	37
Illegal border-crossing at BCPs	475	863	515	8.4	-40
Facilitators	321	173	161	-50	-6.9
Illegal stay	1 674	2 255	3 286	96	46
Refusals of entry	12 857	12 523	16 183	26	29
Asylum applications ²	25 536	14 393	19 590	-23	36
False travel-document users	193	293	390	102	33

² Applications for asylum for EU Member States include all applications received in the territory of the countries and are not limited to those made at Western Balkan borders

Key findings

Even though the number of illegal border-crossings by non-regional² migrants recorded at the green borders in Q3 2017 showed an increase over Q2 2017, it was lower than that of the corresponding quarters in the previous five years;

The number of non-regional migrants detected in an attempt to leave the region via BCPs also decreased, as the enhanced controls might have discouraged migrants from choosing this travel alternative; nonetheless, an increase was observed with regard to the number of migrants detected on entry to Albania from Greece, as the search for travel alternatives continues;

² Migrants who are not nationals of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo², the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro or Serbia

Although the numbers remain modest, a slight increase in migration pressure was observed along the Albania – Montenegro – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Croatia sub-route; this indicates that migrants are looking for new travel alternatives to bypass the current primary route via Serbia;

A slightly higher number of non-regional migrants detected for illegal stay within the region tends to indicate that the enhanced border controls are efficient in preventing easy transit across the Western Balkans;

The irregular flow of citizens of Western Balkan countries remained largely contained at the southern common borders with Greece; a slight increase in the number of Kosovo* citizens in the north of the region was recorded.

Situation at the border

Border surveillance

Illegal border-crossings

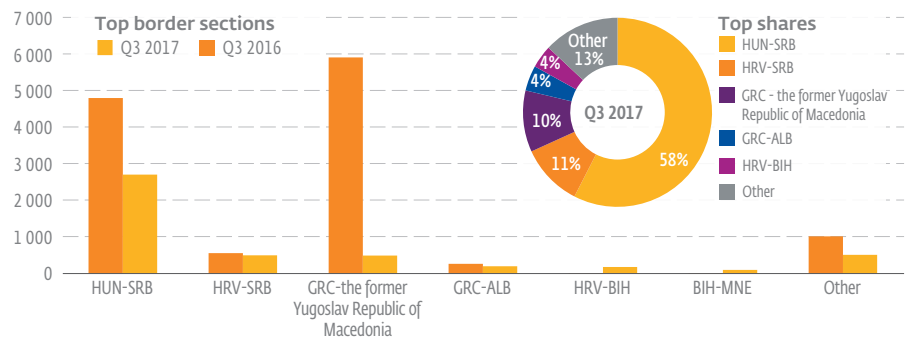
In the third quarter of 2017, WB-RAN data show 4 728 illegal border-crossings by **non-regional migrants**³ en route from Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria reported at the common and regional borders (see Fig. 2). This represents the first period of increase (i.e. 63% up from Q2 2017) reported after five consecutive quarters in which a decrease was recorded. Despite this rise, the number only reached a level similar to that of Q1 2017. Moreover, in comparison to the corresponding three-month periods of previous years, Q3 2017 registered the lowest number of detections since Q3 2011.

Additional information⁴ indicates that Bulgaria also prevented a lower number of illegal border-crossings in the direction of Serbia during the analysed period. This decreasing number of detections indicates that the pressure on this area is continuing to ease off, which is a likely result of the re-enforced border-controls that disrupt irregular travels via the Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Balkan routes.

The overall increase in the number of detected illegal border-crossings registered in Q3 2017 was largely linked to higher pressure exerted on the Hungarian-Serbian border and, to a lesser extent, on other sections (e.g. those along the Greece-Albania-Montenegro-Bosnia and Herzegovina sub-route), from where modest increases were reported over the previous period. The sustained high pressure

Figure 2. A relatively low number of attempts to enter the Western Balkans region through the southern common borders with the EU by non-regional migrants; a slight increase recorded at the Albanian-Greek border; most pressure exerted at the Hungary-Serbia section, likely linked to multiple attempts made by migrants staying in Serbia

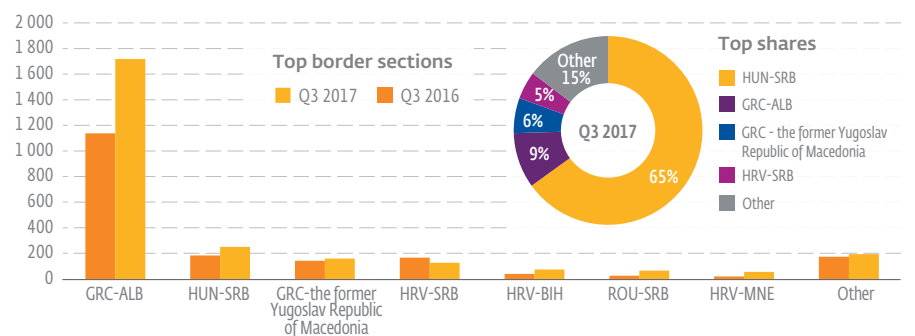
Detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs by non-regional migrants



Source: WB-RAN data as of 6 November 2017

Figure 3. The overall pressure exerted by regional migrants was 40% higher than in the same quarter of 2016. It was largely linked to a rise in the number of detections reported at the southern common borders (Albanian circular migration); detections made at the northern common borders involved a higher number of Kosovo* citizens

Detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs by regional migrants



Source: WB-RAN data as of 6 November 2017

3 Migrants who are not nationals of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro or Serbia

4 WB Daily information exchange data as of 4 August 2017

on the Hungarian-Serbian border section was probably connected to migrants who had been stranded in Serbia trying to exit the region multiple times and, to a lesser extent, by new arrivals from Turkey, Bulgaria or Greece. On the other hand, the

slight rise in the number of detections along the Greece-Albania-Montenegro-Bosnia and Herzegovina sub-route may have been associated with migrants trying to bypass existing security measures along the main route via Serbia.

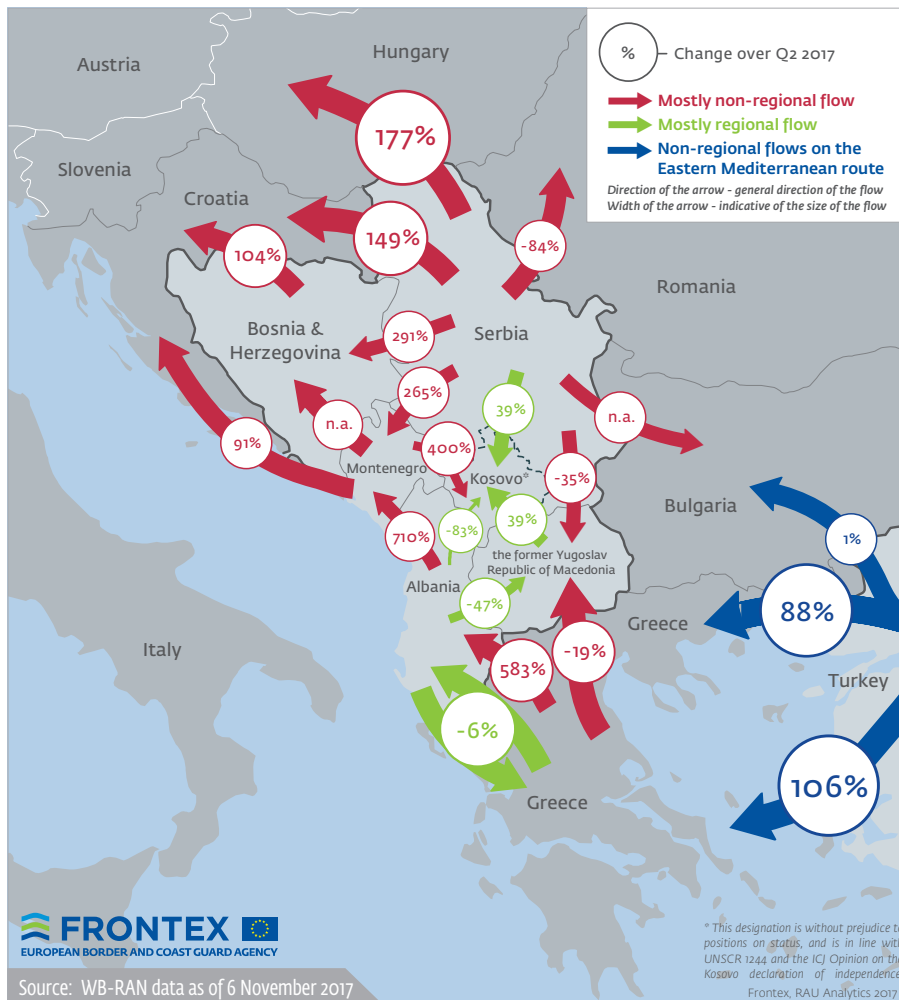


Figure 4. Eastern Mediterranean sea and land routes registered more arrivals in Q3 than in Q2. However, a low number of non-regional migrants attempted to enter the Western Balkans across the southern common borders with Greece and Bulgaria

The regional flow increased slightly but was largely limited to the Greek-Albanian border

Changes in detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs between Q2 and Q3 2017 at particular border sections; main directions and composition of the flow

Overall, the number of detected **Western Balkan regional migrants**⁶ (2 643) remained similar to that of the previous quarter (+6%). Month-on-month, however, this flow slightly declined in size in July, and then was increasing in August and slightly into September. A small increase was observed in September in regard to the number of Kosovo* citizens, which was possibly exacerbated by the media alleging new outflows from this area similar to those observed in 2014.

The majority (71%) of Western Balkan countries nationals detected for illegal border-crossing were still reported in the south of the region at the common borders with Greece. Migrants detected at the common borders with EU Member States in the north of the region accounted for 22% of the regional flow, largely involving Kosovo* citizens and, to a lesser extent, Albanians and Serbs.

Similar to previous quarters, the size of the flow detected en route throughout the region may actually be lower than the reporting indicates, given that the same migrant may have been detected at the same border multiple times (i.e. preventions of crossings) but also at several different border sections while transiting the region.

Pakistanis were the top detected nationality reported in Q3 2017, accounting for 42% of the total non-regional migration flow, followed by Afghans with a 31% share. Both these nationalities registered significant increases over the previous quarter (116% and 149%, respectively). Nonetheless, the vast majority of these migrants were detected at Serbia's borders with Hungary and Croatia, and, to a much lesser extent, on entry to the region from the

southern common borders with Greece or Bulgaria. In the period under review, Algerians, Syrians, and Turks ranked third, fourth and fifth, respectively, among the top five most often detected nationalities, with shares of below 5%.

Only 21 migrants of 'unknown nationality'⁵ were reported in Q3, a low number compared with that recorded during the crisis period when, at times, 40% to 50% of the non-regional flow was reported as 'unknown nationality'.

5 The number of persons reported as 'unknown nationality' is analysed as part of the non-regional migration flow.

6 Migrants who are nationals of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro or Serbia

I. SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW

Facilitators

A total of 161 facilitators were detected at the regional level in the third quarter of 2017, a number 7% below that of the previous three-month period.

Given that migrants can no longer rely on transportation provided by the authorities⁷ and need to bypass re-enforced border-control measures, the demand for facilitation services could in fact be high. Moreover, in a context where facilitation appears increasingly necessary for the irregular transit of the region, more people could be attracted by the prospective profits connected to people smuggling and thus engage in the provision of such services.

⁷ i.e. organised transportation offered by the authorities through the region during the crisis period (WB transit corridor)

Nevertheless, the fact that only 161 facilitators were detected in the reporting period (compared with almost 4 800 illegal border-crossings by non-regional nationals) deserves some attention.

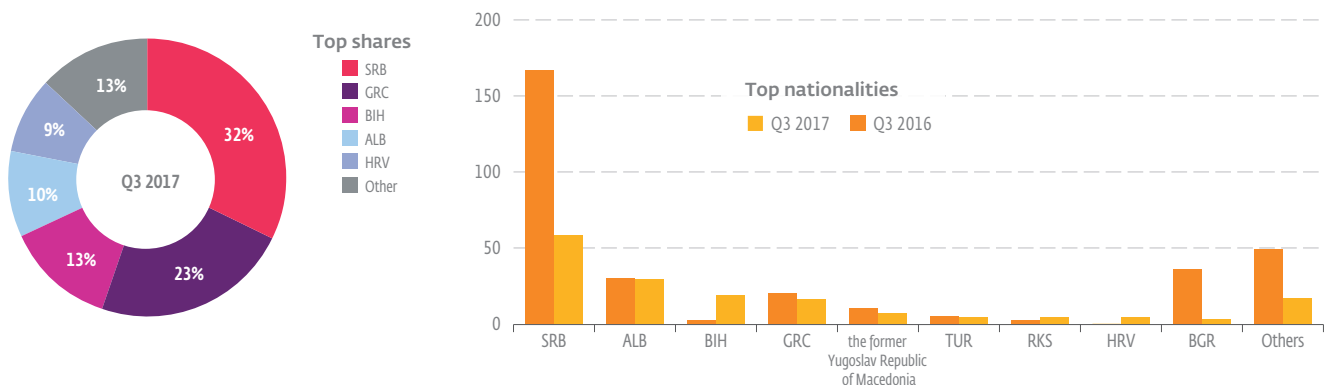
This discrepancy indicates that many migrants attempt to organise their movements across the region on their own, but this tendency appears more pronounced in the north. This suggests that migrants who are stranded in Serbia prefer to try crossing on their own, even if they fail repeatedly (i.e. perhaps the long periods of being stranded drained migrants' financial resources pushing them to organise their own journey across the region). Another possible explanation can be that migrants are directed by facilitators to cross

on their own and meet them on the other side of the border, as the latter are more reluctant to operate in these areas and risk detection.

Roughly 73% of all facilitators detected in the period under review were nationals of Western Balkan countries, 19% were citizens of EU Member States (primarily those neighbouring the region), while the remaining 8% were nationals of third countries from outside the region or persons of 'unknown nationality'. The highest share of detected facilitators was still reported by Serbia (35%), most of whom were Serbian nationals, followed by Greece (23%), which reported mostly Greeks and Albanians.

Figure 5. The number of people smugglers remained relatively low, showing a decrease in relation to previous quarters

Detections of facilitators (at BCPs, between BCPs and inland), by reporting country top shares (left) and nationalities (right)



Source: WB-RAN data as of 6 November 2017

Border checks

Clandestine entries

In Q3 2017, a total of 319 **non-regional migrants** were detected while attempting to illegally cross the borders hiding in vehicles, a number roughly 61% and 23% below those of the previous three-month period and Q3 2016, respectively. A sharp drop in the number of detections reported on both sides of the Serbian-Croatian border section brought the overall number down during the reporting period. This decrease may have resulted from the fact that migrants were discouraged from using this *modus operandi* by the enhanced controls carried out over long periods of time at the BCPs in this section.

On the other hand, Albania reported an increasing number of non-regional migrants (mainly Algerians, Syrians and Moroccans) at its BCPs at the border with Greece, which became the most targeted common section by stowaway migrants en route from Turkey to Western Europe.

Additionally, 196 nationals of Western Balkan countries were reported for clandestine travels at BCPs, with the Albanian-Greek border registering most detections, by and large of Albanians.

Document fraud

In the third quarter of 2017, there were 390 cases of false document use reported by the six Western Balkan countries, a number 33% and 102% higher compared with the previous three-month period and Q3 2016, respectively.

Serbia remained the top reporting country, followed by Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Meanwhile, Albanian and Kosovo* citizens remained the most often detected false document users, followed by Turks.

The number of Iranians increased in the period under review; they were the fourth most detected nationality of document

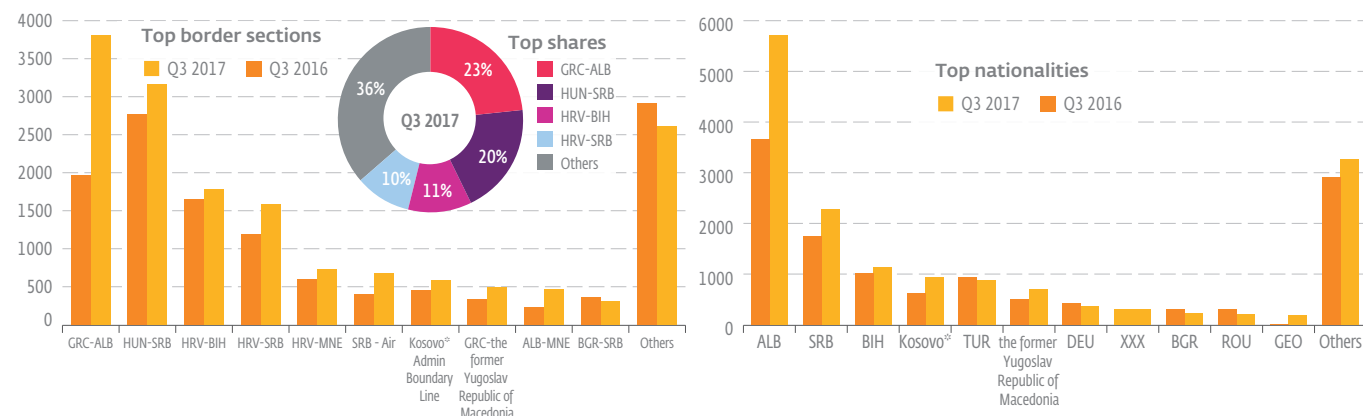
fraudsters. Interestingly, this development coincided with Belgrade's decision to grant Iranian nationals visa-free travel for 30 days in one year.

Passports, ID cards and visas were the most commonly used fraudulent documents. Moreover, 25 forged residence permits were detected. The large majority of ID cards (86 out of 93), residence permits (24 out of 25) and visas (26 out of 34) were EU Member States' documents, as they allow the holder free-movement within the EU/Schengen area.

As regards false passports, 121 out of the detected 229 were reportedly issued by countries from the region, with Albania ranking first (61 documents, largely used by Albanians in an attempt to avoid entry bans imposed due to previous visa liberalisation misuse).

Figure 6. **Turkish nationals still ranked high among the top refused nationalities; Serbia continued to issue refusals of entry to a large number of Georgians at its borders with Hungary, Croatia and Bulgaria**

Persons refused entry by top border sections, top shares (left) and nationalities (right)



Source: WB-RAN data as of 6 November 2017

Refusals of entry

In the period under review, the number of refusals of entry rose by 29% compared with the previous quarter: from roughly 12 500 to 16 200 and by approximately 26% compared with the corresponding quarter of 2016.

Albanians remained the most refused nationality, receiving roughly 35% of all issued decisions despite a 3% decrease compared with Q2. The rest of the top ten nationalities refused entry registered significant increases over the previous quarter, ranging from 6% for nationals of Bosnia and Herzegovina up to 32% for Serbs, 155% for Germans and 211% for the nationals of Kosovo*.

Turkish nationals continued to rank high among refused persons, occupying the fifth place and registering a 67% increase in relation to Q2.

As usual, the vast majority of refusals of entry was issued at land borders (92%), while most of the remaining 8% was recorded at air borders, which reported 93%

more refusals compared with the second quarter.

Most of the refusals reported by the neighbouring EU Member States were issued to nationals of Western Balkan countries (91%). In turn, among those refused entry by the authorities of the six regional partners, 32% were nationals of Western Balkans, 31% nationals of EU Member States/Schengen Associated Countries, and 9% Turkish nationals.

The rise in the number of Georgian nationals refused entry by the six regional countries observed in Q2, continued into the reporting period (i.e. their total number increased from 125 to 182 between Q2 and Q3).

The number of refusals of entry issued to Iranians, Chinese and Indians (nationalities that were recently granted the right to travel to Serbia without a visa) rose significantly during the reporting period. In the case of Iranians and Indians, most decisions were taken by Serbia and, so far, only limited impact has been observed at

Hungary or Croatia's common borders. Chinese were refused mainly by Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

For the most part, non-regional transiting migrants continue to prefer crossing the region via the green borders. The number of refusals of entry issued to Afghans was the only one that remained at the same relatively high level observed over the past two quarters, while Syrians, Iraqis, Algerians and, more recently, Pakistanis continued being detected in low numbers.

Although the numbers remain modest, more refusals of entry were issued at air borders to the mentioned nationalities in Q3 compared with Q2, mostly by Serbia and, to a lesser extent, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro.

It remains possible that enhanced border surveillance activities in the region push migrants to look for alternative travel options, including transit via BCPs without fulfilling the conditions of entry.

Situation in the Western Balkans

Illegal stay in the Western Balkan countries

In Q3 2017, 752 detections of illegal stay were reported by the six Western Balkan countries, a similar number compared with both the previous quarter and the corresponding three-month period of 2016.

As regards the top nationalities of illegal stayers, citizens from the six regional partners continued to account for the largest share of detections made in the quarter under review (roughly 40%), with Serbs ranking first, ahead of Albanians.

Citizens of EU Member States, especially those neighbouring the region, were also reported for illegally staying in the six Western Balkan countries. These persons accounted for approximately 17% of all detections reported during the third quarter.

The remaining 43% share of detections was linked to citizens of third countries from outside the region or unknown nationalities. Nonetheless, not all of these persons were of nationalities which can be directly associated with the non-regional migration flow transiting the Western Balkans.

However, Afghans, Pakistanis, Algerians, Syrians and Iraqis, who generally do not regard the region as a destination but rather an area to cross on the way towards Western Europe, are nationalities directly linked to the non-regional transiting flow. Thus, a closer look at these nationalities' performance against the illegal stay indicator on the territories of the six regional partners could give some indication as to the border-permeability in the Western Balkans region.

A total of 101 of the abovementioned nationals staying illegally were detected by the six regional partners in Q3 (13% of the regional total), a relatively stable number compared with the previous three-month period (i.e. 97). Afghans, Algerians and Syrians were detected in slightly higher numbers, while fewer Iraqis and Pakistanis were reported.

As mentioned in previous editions of the quarterly, the increased number of illegal stayers from these countries might also indicate that enhanced border controls

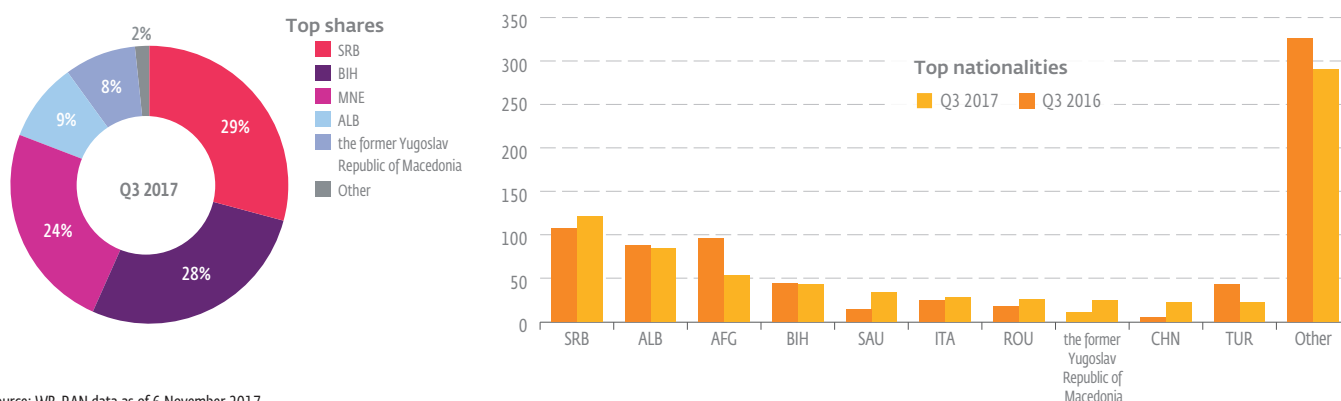
are making the region more difficult to transit, which means that migrants have to spend more time en route.

Over the past two years, there has been a large discrepancy between the number of illegal border-crossings by non-regional migrants originating from Greece/Turkey reported by the six Western Balkan partners and the detected illegal stayers of corresponding nationalities.

Although this discrepancy between the two indicators continued into Q3 2017, its magnitude was not as significant. Specifically, in the reporting period, the ratio between illegal border-crossings between BCPs by some of the top non-regional nationalities detected by the six Western Balkan partners (Afghans, Pakistanis, Algerians, Syrians and Iraqis) and illegal stayers of the same citizenships was of one illegal stayer to every nine crossings in Q3 2017 (1 to 7 in Q2). By contrast, this ratio was of one illegal stayer to every 22 illegal border-crossings in Q1 2017 and one illegal stayer to 33 illegal border-crossings in Q3 2016.

Figure 7. **The gap between non-regional nationalities reported for illegal border-crossing and those same nationalities detected as illegal stayers was smaller than in previous quarters; Afghans have remained one of the top ten detected nationalities**

Illegal stayers, by reporting Western Balkan country top shares (left) and nationalities (right)



Source: WB-RAN data as of 6 November 2017

Migration pressure exerted by non-regional migrants below the levels reported in the corresponding quarters since 2011

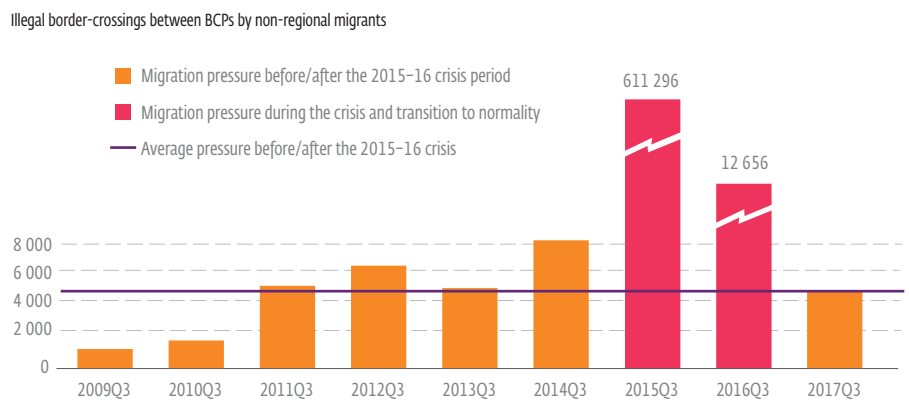
The pressure exerted on the region by **non-regional migrants** transiting the Western Balkans rose by 36% compared with Q2. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that Q2 2017 registered the lowest number of detections per quarter since Q1 2011. Moreover, even though a rise was recorded, Q3 2017 registered values below those of the corresponding three-month periods of all previous years since 2011.

In the north of the region, the common border of Serbia with Hungary reported growing pressure month-on-month throughout the third quarter of 2017, while the borders with Croatia and Romania reported lower numbers (Fig. 10).

Moreover, a slightly higher number of migrants attempting to reach Bosnia-Herzegovina from Serbia was observed, which shows that migrants constantly look for alternative travel options in order to bypass the enhanced controls established at Serbia's borders with Hungary, Croatia and Romania.

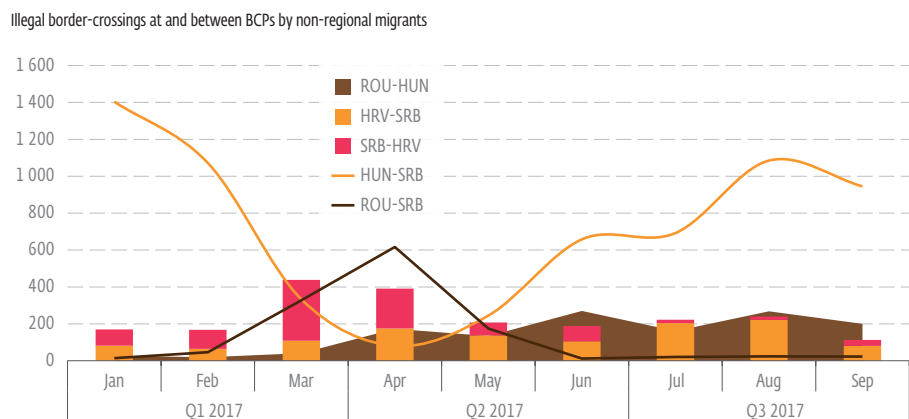
The pressure observed at the Romania-Serbia and Croatia-Serbia border sections increased between February and April 2017, which was likely linked to both improved weather conditions (which resulted in increased migrant mobility) and institutional developments in the region (i.e. a change in Hungary's migration policy⁸ advertised since February and adopted at the end of March). By contrast, the pressure exerted on the Hungarian-Serbian border in the same period decreased. In

Figure 8. **The migratory pressure reported during the third quarter of 2017 reached levels close to those recorded in the corresponding periods before the onset of the migration crisis, which signifies a gradual return to normality in the Western Balkans**



Source: WB-RAN data as of 6 November 2017

Figure 9. **The migratory pressure at the Romanian-Serbian and Croatian-Serbian borders remain low and even continued to decrease towards the end of the third quarter; migrants were attempting to cross the Hungarian-Serbian border section more often**



Source: WB-RAN and WB Daily information exchange data as of 6 and 10 November 2017

8 Return of migrants from all territory to be processed in the transit areas at the borders; no inland access.

other words, as weather improved migrants stranded in Serbia began looking for alternative travel solutions to bypass the Hungarian-Serbian border section, which led to the described developments.

Moving into the second quarter, however, the pressure on the Romanian and Croatian borders with Serbia began decreasing while migrants slowly started to once more target Hungary.

This situation continued into the third quarter, with the pressure on the Hungarian-Serbian border section rising to levels similar to those reported at the beginning of the year.

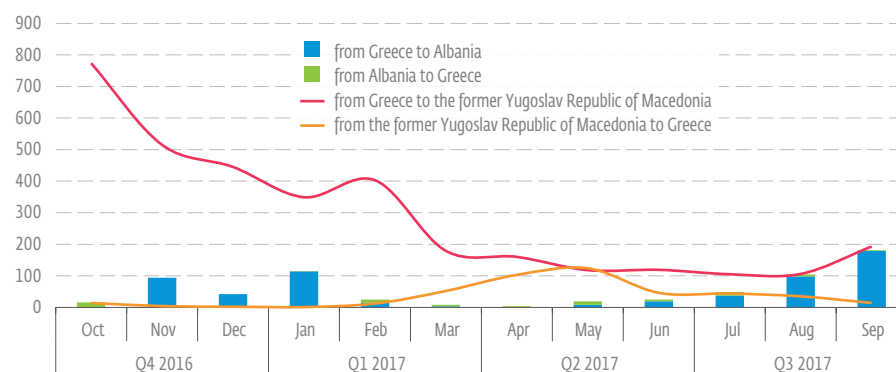
Enhanced control activities carried out at all of the mentioned northern sections likely discouraged migrants from taking alternative routes to leave the region/Serbia. Specifically, migrants appear to have realised that none of the travel alternatives through Romania or Croatia are easy options (and thus probably require expensive facilitation services). As a result, migrants appear to have reconsidered their options with more of them trying the more direct routing into Hungary. Even though the success rate of onward travels⁹ is low, this direct crossing may be more affordable if made without the use of facilitation services.

Overall, the pressure observed by Hungary, as well as Romania and Croatia remains most probably linked to migrants who had been staying in Serbia for some time and, to a lesser extent, to newly arrived ones. Given the prevention measures implemented at these sections, it is likely that one migrant is detected attempting to cross the border multiple times. Thus, the pressure exerted at the borders is likely higher than the size of the transiting flow would indicate.

⁹ Migrants detected by Hungary are processed in reception centres at the border with no access to the territory / possibilities of moving onwards before the procedures are finalised

Figure 10. **The migratory pressure between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia remained relatively low, mostly associated with prevented crossings; more attempts to transit between Greece and Albania were observed in Q3**

Illegal border-crossings at and between BCPs by non-regional migrants by direction of travel



Source: WB-RAN data as of 6 November 2017

An analysis of social media reveals a number of findings indicating an interest in/possibilities of undetected travels

- Social media discussions seem to suggest a shift away from spontaneous irregular migration, which relies on illegal border-crossings and bypassing border checks at the external border of the European Union and during onward migration.
- Document providers increasingly offer arrangements targeting individual migrant groups, such as specific identity cards, refugee certificates or inclusion in regular relocation programmes.
- Providers claim to arrange or produce documents using increasingly sophisticated methods allowing for unhindered travel.
- 'How to avoid detection along the way' is a recurring topic in discussions of land travel from Greece.
- Entering the EU via Bulgaria appears to attract renewed interest as smugglers point out control disruptions along the border or physical security gaps, such as holes underneath the border fence.
- In individual cases, refugee certificates are discussed as a means to leave the Greek Aegean Islands for the Greek mainland.
- Some providers offer personalised refugee identity documents in addition to passports of target countries.
- Frequent discussions regarding intra-Schengen identity checks and fingerprinting signal an increased awareness of the limits to the movements which can result from detection. As a consequence, smugglers regularly claim that taking fingerprints or any other identification methods will be avoided during transit or at the first point of entry into the EU.
- A growing number of requests regarding visa for Bosnia and Herzegovina and regarding entry into the Schengen area via Croatia may be a sign of a shift away from the Serbia-centred land route.

Source: EXOP/RAU

II. FEATURED RISK ANALYSES

Moreover, the difficulty of leaving the region towards Western Europe also produced an interesting effect **in the south of the region**. Specifically, the pressure on the traditional entry points to the main Serbia-centred sub-route remained relatively low with migrants even reportedly travelling towards Greece. Meanwhile, a

slight rise in pressure was observed by Albania at its common border with Greece.

This shows that the enhanced border-control activities and cooperation along the traditional corridor via Serbia are discouraging migration. Nonetheless, more resilient migrants could still try to cross

undetected, although the number of those who succeed are likely to be modest. Other migrants appear to continuously search for alternative travel options, like re-routing via Greece, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina or using false documents and air travel alternatives.

A slight increase in non-regional migration pressure along the Greece-Albania–Montenegro-Bosnia and Herzegovina sub-route

Greece-Albania

This section saw a slight increase in the pressure exerted by non-regional migrants towards the end of 2016 and in the first two months of 2017. It was an initial reaction to the fact that other transit options had become increasingly unattainable (i.e. the closure of the WB transit corridor). Then, the numbers decreased and remained relatively unchanged with more migrants reportedly travelling from Albania towards Greece between March and

June, which is indicative of difficulties related to onward travel.

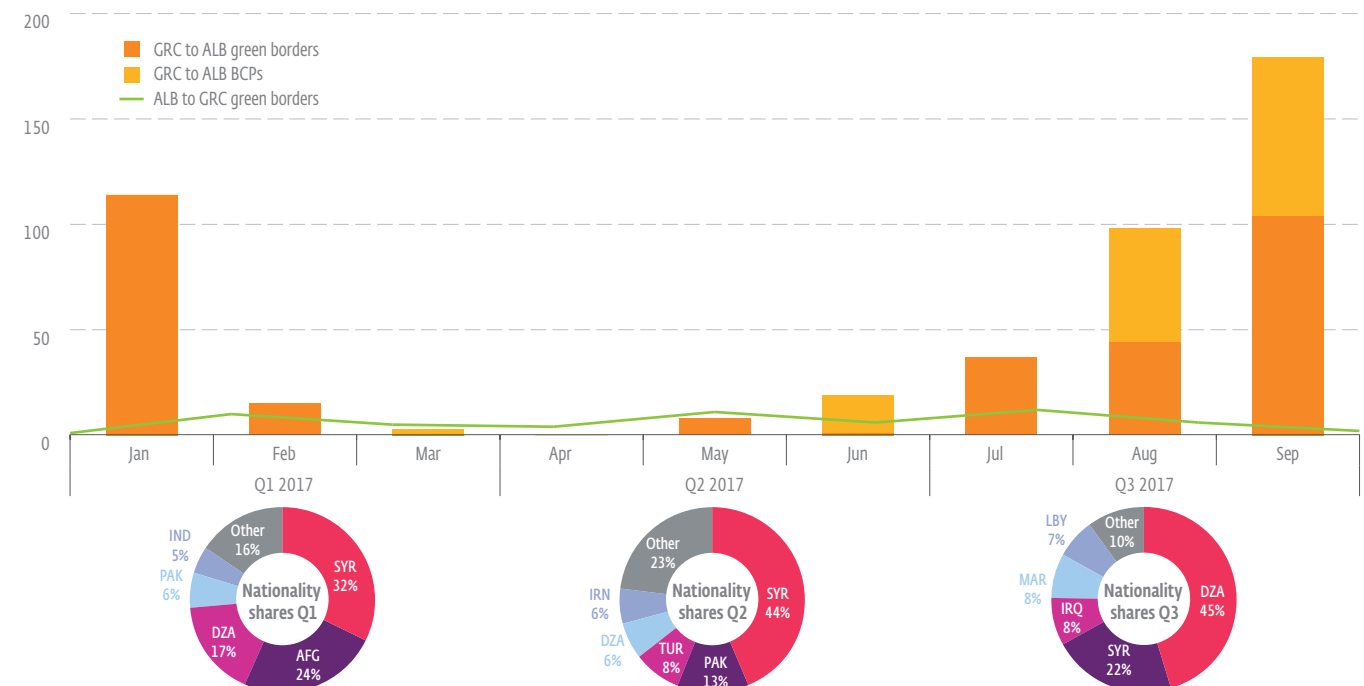
Nonetheless, in Q3 2017 it was observed by the Albanian authorities that more migrants began to try entering the country from Greece, especially through green borders but also at BCPs. This is most likely a consequence of implementing enhanced border controls which make the transit via the Serbia-centred land route more difficult, thus, pushing the more resilient migrants to attempt to find alternative travel

options. Operational information indicates that some of the migrants apprehended by Albania had previously attempted to travel through the region (i.e. had stayed in Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or in Montenegro) before deciding to try transiting via Albania.

Generally, migrants do not apply for asylum after being detected and opt for being readmitted to Greece shortly.

Figure 11. An increase in pressure at the Greece-Albania border section during Q3, a likely consequence of enhanced controls carried out along the traditional Serbia-centred route

Illegal border-crossings at and between BCPs by non-regional migrants by direction of travel and top nationality shares



Source: WB-RAN data as of 6 November 2017

II. FEATURED RISK ANALYSES

Albania-Montenegro

A small increase in migration pressure exerted by non-regional migrants at this section was also observed throughout 2016, mostly after the closure of the WB transit corridor last year in March.

Between January and September 2017, a total of 117 illegal border-crossings by non-regional migrants were reported at

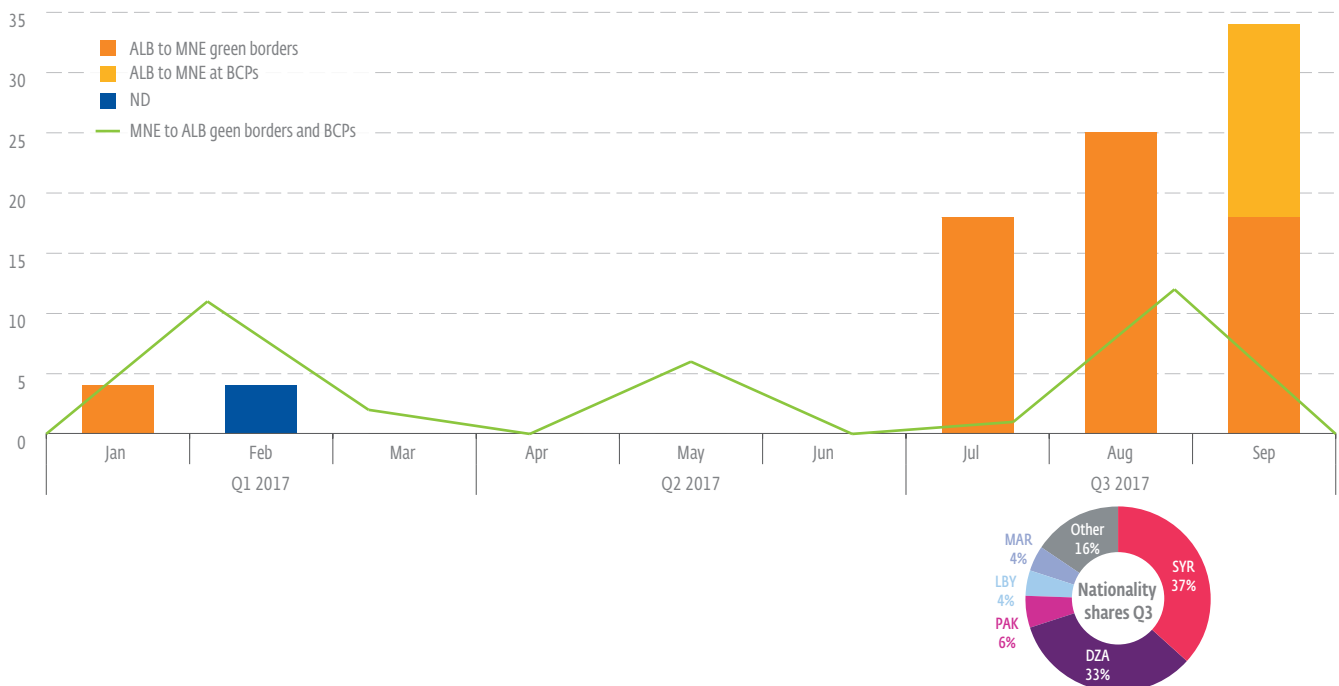
this border section, most of whom were detected during the third quarter, largely between BCPs. Although migrants travelled in both directions, starting from June, most of them were moving from Albania in the direction of Montenegro. It seems to have been a consequence of increased pressure on Albania's southern border with Greece, while the detected migrants are most likely those who had managed to enter Albania undetected.

Operational information indicates that most migrants attempt to cross into Montenegro from Albania in the areas of Bozaj or Sukobin before moving toward Bosnia and Herzegovina or to Croatia.

Most of the detections reported in the third quarter were made by the Albanian authorities, largely on exit towards Montenegro and thus indicating prevented crossings.

Figure 12. **An increase in pressure at the Albania-Montenegro border section during Q3, a likely consequence of enhanced controls implemented along the traditional Serbia-centred route**

Illegal border-crossings at and between BCPs by non-regional migrants by direction of travel and top nationality shares



Source: WB-RAN data as of 6 November 2017

Montenegro-Bosnia and Herzegovina

Similarly to the Montenegrin-Albanian border, the section between Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina saw a slight increase in the number of detected illegal border-crossings by non-regional migrants towards the end of 2016 and in the first two months of 2017. This development was likely related to persons looking

for travel alternatives to cross the Western Balkans via Albania after the closure of the WB transit corridor in March 2016.

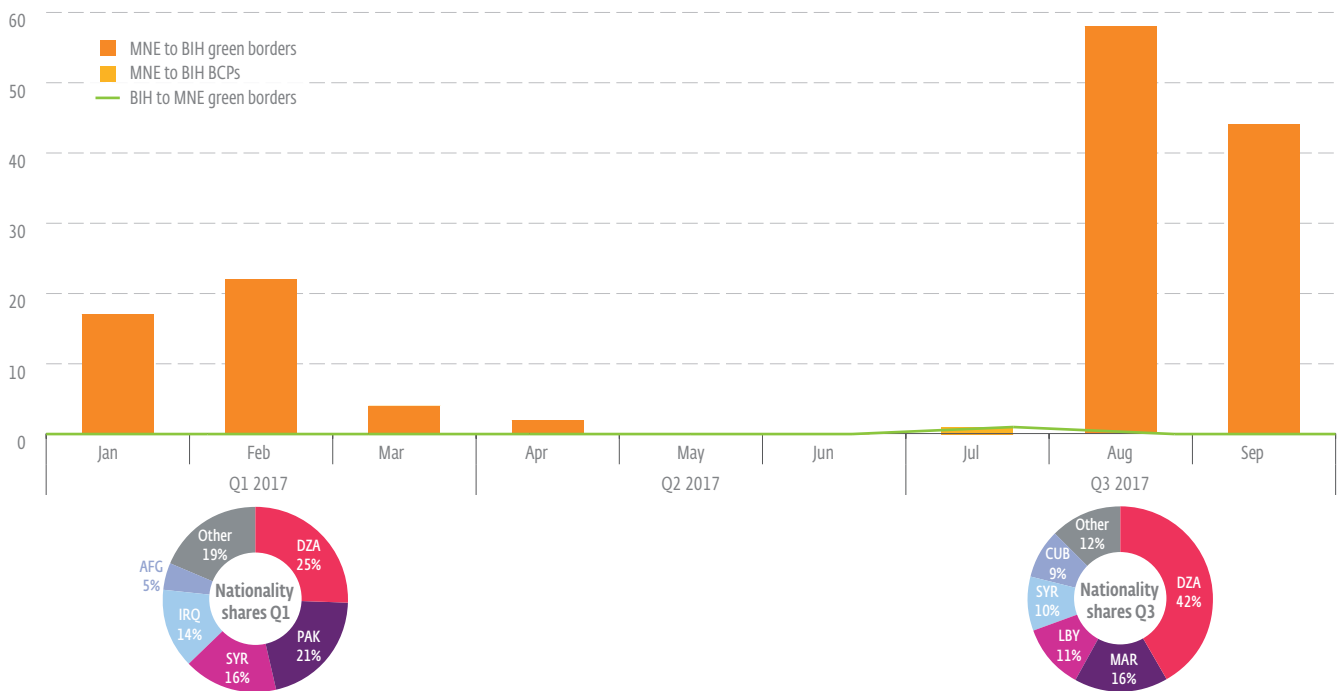
The pressure then declined in the summer of 2017 before increasing considerably again during the third quarter, especially in August and September. The detected nationalities and the increase pattern appear largely consistent with those observed at the two border sections mentioned before

(Greece-Albania and Albania-Montenegro) suggesting that the detected migrants followed the Albania-Montenegro-Bosnia and Herzegovina sub-route. (Fig. 14).

The Cuban nationals reported at the border section in question most probably travelled to Montenegro legally (taking advantage of the visa-free regime) before attempting to exit towards Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Figure 13. An increase in pressure at the Montenegro–Bosnia and Herzegovina border section during Q3, a likely consequence of enhanced controls established along the traditional Serbia-centred route

Illegal border-crossings at and between BCPs by non-regional migrants by direction of travel and top nationality shares



Source: WB-RAN data as of 6 November 2017

II. FEATURED RISK ANALYSES

Bosnia and Herzegovina–Croatia

An increase in migration pressure was also observed at the border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina which was especially noticeable in the third quarter of 2017. Nonetheless, this increase is mostly linked to the detections of Turkish nationals trying to illegally exit towards Croatia. In most cases, they had first travelled to Bosnia-Herzegovina legally, taking advantage of the visa-free regime.

Moreover, Pakistanis and Afghans ranked second and third, respectively, among the

most detected nationalities in Q3 2017. The same nationalities are not detected in high numbers at the other border sections along the analysed sub-route but they are quite commonly detected at other regional borders and are also present in Serbia.

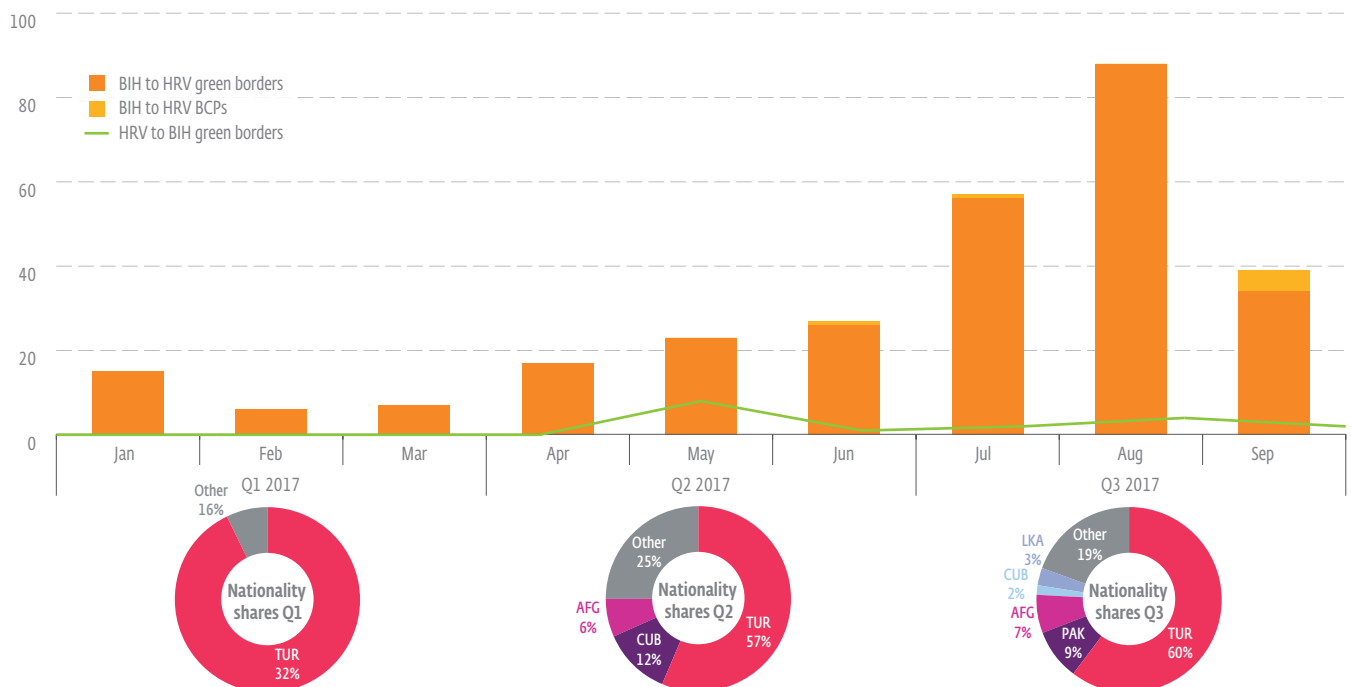
Available data indicates that the migratory pressure at the Serbia–Bosnia and Herzegovina border section also rose during the third quarter, when a total of 75 non-regional migrants were reported (mostly Afghans and Syrians and, to a lesser extent, Pakistanis and Comorians). Most of the migrants were detected trying to enter Bosnia and Herzegovina, as they had

probably failed in their attempt to exit Serbia towards Hungary, Croatia or Romania.

All in all, it is difficult to establish the exact impact that the increase in the migratory pressure recorded along the analysed sub-route had on the border section between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that not only migrants present in Serbia but also those travelling along the analysed sub-route might have contributed to the observed rise in Q3 2017.

Figure 14. **An increase in pressure at the Croatia–Bosnia and Herzegovina border section during Q3, largely linked to Turkish nationals**

Illegal border-crossings at and between BCPS by non-regional migrants by direction of travel and top nationality shares



Source: WB-RAN data as of 6 November 2017

III. Statistical annex

LEGEND

Symbols and abbreviations: **n.a.** not applicable
: data not available

Source: WB-RAN and FRAN data as of 4 October 2017,
unless otherwise indicated

Note: 'Member States' in the tables refer to FRAN Member
States, including both 28 EU Member States
and three Schengen Associated Countries

Table 1. **Illegal border-crossing between BCPs**

Detections reported by Western Balkan and neighbouring countries, top five border sections and top ten nationalities

	2016			2017			2017 Q3		per cent of total
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	% change on year ago	previous Qtr	
Top Five Sections									
Hungary-Land-Serbia	11 194	5 006	4 002	2 900	1 074	2 971	-41	177	40
Albania-Land-Greece	2 209	1 407	1 603	1 939	1 867	1 924	37	3.1	26
Greece-Land-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	14 587	6 078	1 891	1 056	809	656	-89	-19	8.9
Croatia-Land-Serbia	81	731	308	214	253	631	-14	149	8.6
Bosnia and Herzegovina-Land-Croatia	45	59	212	67	127	259	339	104	3.5
All Other	933	1 263	967	875	1 254	930	-26	-26	13
Top Ten Nationalities									
Albania	2 224	1 422	1 875	1 994	2 138	1 997	40	-6.6	27
Pakistan	3 204	1 941	1 443	1 157	921	1 991	2.6	116	27
Afghanistan	9 662	5 103	2 793	1 529	594	1 478	-71	149	20
Kosovo*	211	357	246	335	224	432	21	93	5.9
Algeria	150	214	208	303	125	245	14	96	3.3
Syria	4 290	1 990	794	708	246	197	-90	-20	2.7
Turkey	329	161	90	50	85	154	-4.3	81	2.1
Serbia	83	62	92	50	78	129	108	65	1.8
Libya	71	42	22	54	48	98	133	104	1.3
Iraq	1 710	886	490	421	487	94	-89	-81	1.3
All Other	7 115	2 366	930	450	438	556	-77	27	7.5
Total	29 049	14 544	8 983	7 051	5 384	7 371	-49	37	100

* 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

Table 2. **Illegal border-crossing at BCPs**

Detections reported by Western Balkan and neighbouring countries, top five border sections and top ten nationalities

	2016			2017			2017 Q3		per cent of total
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	% change on year ago	previous Qtr	
Top Five Sections									
Albania-Land-Greece	24	26	22	9	20	271	942	n.a.	53
Croatia-Land-Serbia	17	337	211	746	653	71	-79	-89	14
Albania-Land-Montenegro	5	25	2	0	3	37	48	n.a.	7.2
Croatia-Land-Montenegro	5	8	7	8	23	22	175	-4	4.3
Montenegro - Air	0	0	2	3	20	21	n.a.	5	4.1
All Other	254	79	114	131	144	93	18	-35	18
Top Ten Nationalities									
Albania	43	45	28	22	21	176	291	n.a.	34
Algeria	6	7	7	7	9	83	n.a.	n.a.	16
Afghanistan	68	263	198	674	667	73	-72	-89	14
Syria	112	48	16	11	27	37	-23	37	7.2
Iraq	11	1	10	7	14	23	n.a.	64	4.5
Germany	0	6	1	1	7	15	150	114	2.9
Kosovo ^o	7	10	13	19	5	14	40	180	2.7
Libya	0	8	2	2	10	13	63	30	2.5
Pakistan	25	20	50	112	45	12	-40	-73	2.3
Morocco	1	13	3	0	3	11	-15	267	2.1
All Other	32	54	30	42	55	58	7.4	5.5	11
Total	305	475	358	897	863	515	8.4	-40	100

^o 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.

Table 3. **Facilitators**

Detections reported by Western Balkan and neighbouring countries, place of detection and top ten nationalities

	2016			2017			2017 Q3		per cent of total
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	% change on year ago	% change on previous Qtr	
Place of Detection									
Land	291	265	226	149	122	132	-50	8.2	82
Inland	16	55	40	39	49	24	-56	-51	15
Sea	0	0	0	0	2	5	<i>n.a.</i>	150	3.1
Air	0	1	0	0	0	0	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	
Top Ten Nationalities									
Serbia	162	167	108	68	71	58	-65	-18	36
Albania	22	30	34	32	34	29	-3.3	-15	18
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10	2	3	9	4	19	<i>n.a.</i>	375	12
Greece	14	20	23	20	22	16	-20	-27	9.9
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	28	10	11	5	1	7	-30	<i>n.a.</i>	4.3
Turkey	0	5	5	7	3	4	-20	33	2.5
Kosovo*	2	2	0	2	3	4	100	33	2.5
Croatia	2	0	1	6	0	4	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	2.5
Czech Republic	0	0	0	0	0	3	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	1.9
Bulgaria	32	36	39	20	5	3	-92	-40	1.9
All Other	35	49	42	19	30	14	-71	-53	8.7
Total	307	321	266	188	173	161	-50	-6.9	100

* 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

Table 4. **Illegal stay**

Detections reported by Western Balkan and neighbouring countries, place of detection and top ten nationalities

	2016			2017			2017 Q3		per cent of total
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	% change on year ago	% change on previous Qtr	
Place of Detection									
Land	924	896	765	576	1 479	2 534	183	71	77
Inland	660	576	566	721	776	752	31	-3.1	23
Not specified	202	202	183	30	0	0	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	
Top Ten Nationalities									
Serbia	750	617	589	514	1 061	1 612	161	52	49
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	88	83	89	88	289	654	688	126	20
Albania	186	209	240	114	173	287	37	66	8.7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	69	56	45	69	103	104	86	1	3.2
Montenegro	23	26	18	32	62	75	188	21	2.3
Afghanistan	53	115	20	21	40	56	-51	40	1.7
Kosovo*	21	38	41	65	53	48	26	-9.4	1.5
Turkey	93	69	45	31	55	47	-32	-15	1.4
Saudi Arabia	0	14	0	1	0	34	143	<i>n.a.</i>	1
Italy	18	25	30	29	51	28	12	-45	0.9
All Other	485	422	397	363	368	341	-19	-7.3	10
Total	1 786	1 674	1 514	1 327	2 255	3 286	96	46	100

* 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

Table 5. Refusals of entry

Refusals reported by Western Balkan and neighbouring countries, border type and top ten nationalities

	2016			2017			2017 Q3		per cent of total
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	% change on year ago	% change on previous Qtr	
Border Type									
Land	9 365	12 026	12 939	9 749	11 797	14 809	23	26	92
Air	618	794	772	548	694	1 340	69	93	8.3
Sea	14	37	22	4	32	34	-8.1	6.3	0.2
Top Ten Nationalities									
Albania	3 451	3 653	3 507	4 589	5 909	5 715	56	-3.3	35
Serbia	1 635	1 738	1 460	1 717	1 715	2 271	31	32	14
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 610	1 019	1 126	1 107	1 068	1 135	11	6.3	7
Kosovo ^a	225	617	326	254	303	941	53	211	5.8
Turkey	586	938	534	417	524	875	-6.7	67	5.4
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	330	507	381	483	436	692	36	59	4.3
Not specified	133	424	4 365	94	204	432	1.9	112	2.7
Germany	136	427	82	74	146	373	-13	155	2.3
Bulgaria	179	307	176	89	152	225	-27	48	1.4
Romania	138	298	82	82	110	207	-31	88	1.3
All Other	1 574	2 929	1 694	1 395	1 956	3 317	13	70	20
Total	9 997	12 857	13 733	10 301	12 523	16 183	26	29	100

^a 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

Table 6. Applications for asylum

Applications for international protection reported by Western Balkan and neighbouring countries^{a,b} – top ten nationalities

	2016			2017			2017 Q3		per cent of total
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	% change on year ago	% change on previous Qtr	
Top Ten Nationalities									
Syria	11 608	9 648	11 573	6 126	3 093	5 053	-48	63	26
Iraq	3 244	2 931	4 683	2 876	2 089	3 781	29	81	19
Pakistan	3 007	2 779	2 701	2 549	2 355	2 674	-3.8	14	14
Afghanistan	9 918	6 093	6 520	3 781	2 193	2 657	-56	21	14
Turkey	352	115	197	236	350	786	583	125	4
Albania	292	321	499	336	688	741	131	7.7	3.8
Iran	922	571	692	538	432	441	-23	2.1	2.3
Bangladesh	306	469	417	343	359	437	-6.8	22	2.2
Algeria	264	542	591	410	230	381	-30	66	1.9
Palestine ^a	364	283	359	660	161	337	19	109	1.7
All Other	1 894	1 784	2 237	2 854	2 443	2 302	29	-5.8	12
Total	32 171	25 536	30 469	20 709	14 393	19 590	-23	36	100

^a This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of EU Member States on this issue.^b Applications for asylum for EU Member States include all applications received in the territory of the countries and are not limited to those made at Western Balkan borders

Table 7. Document fraud

Detections reported by Western Balkan countries, border type, document type, fraud type, top ten nationalities and top countries of issuance of documents

	2016			2017			2017 Q3		per cent of total
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	% change on year ago	previous Qtr	
Border Type									
Land	123	149	179	212	184	199	34	8.2	51
Air	47	36	53	40	88	152	322	73	39
Sea	4	8	5	12	21	37	363	76	9.5
Not specified	0	0	0	0	0	2	n.a.	n.a.	0.5
Document Type									
Passports	110	118	121	135	159	228	93	43	58
ID cards	28	40	69	65	82	93	133	13	24
Visas	4	4	16	20	19	34	n.a.	79	8.7
Residence permit	8	14	21	25	18	25	79	39	6.4
Stamps	10	9	3	10	0	8	-11	n.a.	2.1
Not specified	14	8	7	9	15	2	-75	-86	0.5
Top Ten Nationalities									
Albania	97	83	87	91	104	126	52	21	32
Kosovo*	28	47	58	75	68	90	91	32	23
Turkey	5	6	10	24	17	35	n.a.	106	9
Iran	1	4	5	2	7	24	n.a.	243	6.2
Serbia	15	15	12	27	36	19	27	-47	4.9
Afghanistan	0	0	1	1	6	17	n.a.	183	4.4
India	0	0	1	0	3	13	n.a.	333	3.3
Pakistan	5	2	12	2	3	11	n.a.	267	2.8
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2	3	3	3	3	9	200	200	2.3
Bulgaria	6	5	9	.	1	6	20	500	1.5
All Other	15	28	39	39	45	40	43	-11	10
Top Ten Countries of Issuance of Documents									
Albania	70	65	51	47	56	69	6.2	23	18
Italy	13	14	32	42	63	47	236	-25	12
Greece	13	10	13	24	18	35	250	94	9
Serbia	15	21	14	27	29	31	48	6.9	7.9
Bulgaria	12	4	23	13	7	21	n.a.	200	5.4
Pakistan	2	0	0	2	2	20	n.a.	n.a.	5.1
France	1	3	7	8	12	19	n.a.	58	4.9
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	8	10	13	16	11	13	30	18	3.3
Turkey	3	1	2	3	3	13	n.a.	n.a.	3.3
Germany	5	5	9	8	11	13	160	18	3.3
All Other	32	60	72	74	81	109	82	35	28
Total	174	193	237	264	293	390	102	33	100

* 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

Explanatory note

Detections reported for EU Member States for indicators Illegal border-crossing between BCPs, Illegal border-crossing at BCPs, Refusals of entry and Document fraud are detections at the common land borders on entry only. For Facilitators, detections at the common land borders on entry and exit are included.

For Illegal stay, only detections at the common land borders on exit are included. For Asylum, all applications (land, sea, air and inland) are included.

For Western Balkan countries, all indicators – save for Refusals of entry – include detections (applications) on exit and entry at the land, sea and air borders.

Each section in the table refers to total detections reported by WB-RAN countries and to neighbouring land border detections reported by EU Member States.



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