FRONTEX

EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY

Risk Analysis for 2018

Risk Analysis for 2018

DISCLAIMERS

This is a Frontex document. This publication or its contents do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Frontex concerning the legal status of any country, territory or city or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

All maps and charts included in this report are the sole property of Frontex and any unauthorised use is prohibited. Frontex disclaims any liability with respect to the boundaries, names and designations used on the maps.

The contents of open-source boxes are presented only to give context and media representation of irregular-migration phenomena without engaging Frontex responsibility.

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.

Table of contents

List of acronyms used

BCP	border-crossing point
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EC	European Commission
EDF	European Union Document-Fraud
EDF-RAN	European Union Document-Fraud Risk Analysis Network
EEZ	exclusive economic zones
ETIAS	European Travel Information and Authorisation System
EU	European Union
EU+	28 EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland
EU-Lisa	European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice
Eurodac	European Dactyloscopy
Eurojust	European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit
Europol	European Police Office
Eurostat	Statistical office of the European Union
FIRE	Fighting Illicit Firearms Trafficking Routes and Actors at European Level
FRAN	Frontex Risk Analysis Network
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
FTF	foreign terrorist fighter
FTZ	free-trade zones
IBM	Integrated Border Management
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ID	identification document
INTCEN	European Union's Intelligence Analysis Centre
Interpol	International Criminal Police Organization
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
ISIS/ISIL/Daesh	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JO	Joint Operation
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office (*Office européen de lutte antifraude*)
PeDRA	Processing Personal Data for Risk Analysis
RAU	Frontex Risk Analysis Unit
SAC	Schengen Associated Country
THB	trafficking in human beings
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council resolution

Search and rescue by Dutch vessel Amstel – Triton Operation, 2016
© Frontex

1. Preface

The year 2017, the first full year for Frontex as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, saw a significant fall in the detections of illegal border-crossing along the EU's external borders. This was mainly due to a drop in detections on the Eastern and Central Mediterranean migratory routes. The Western Balkans route also experienced a large fall in illegal border-crossings.

The sudden plunge in the number of irregular migrants reaching Italy in mid-2017 was the most noteworthy development at the external borders of the EU since the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement in March 2016.

Nevertheless, the overall pressure on Europe's external borders remained relatively high, and the Western Mediterranean route saw the highest number of irregular migrants since Frontex began systematically collecting data in 2009. The increase became especially pronounced in the second half of the year when the number of nationals from the Maghreb countries (notably Moroccans, Algerians and Tunisians) rose significantly.

The fluid situation at the EU's external borders and the ever-changing *modus operandi* of the smugglers underlines the need for a European response to the shifting migratory pressure, with a strengthened Frontex playing a key part in channelling the necessary resources. For the first time, the European Border and Coast Guard regulation clearly states that 'the management of the external borders is a shared responsibility of the Union and the Member States'. As a result, the Agency acts as the operational arm of the EU, and a partner for the Member States.

Frontex is a cornerstone of the EU's area of freedom, security and justice. To help Europe better prepare for future challenges at its external borders, Frontex has begun conducting vulnerability assessments in Member States and already shared its first findings with national authorities. In 2018, the agency will deploy its first liaison officers to EU Member States to cement our relations with our partners at the national level. Their duties will also include contributing to future vulnerability assessments. Their presence in the Member States will further illustrate that national authorities and the Agency together create the European Border and Coast Guard.

The Agency has also taken on new tasks to help combat cross-border crime. Officers deployed by Frontex have helped Member States arrest hundreds of suspected facilitators and detect fraudulent documents. Combatting document fraud and targeting the organised crime groups that are involved in producing fake and fraudulent documents are among the Agency's priorities. These actions have a direct impact on the internal security of the EU as detection of document fraud, along with sharing intelligence collected at the external borders, is a key tool in combatting the terrorist threat.

The new Frontex, as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, is more active at the EU external borders than ever.

© Frontex

At any moment, the Agency has between 1 300 and 1 800 officers from Member States deployed in its operations, many times the number from just a few years ago. In case of an emergency at Europe's external borders, Frontex has at its disposal 1 500 officers, along with additional vessels, aircraft, vehicles and other technical equipment. Frontex is more involved than ever in different stages of migration management in the EU.

The Agency has taken large leaps in the area of returns to become an essential actor in law enforcement on the European level. In 2017, Frontex assisted Member States in returning more than 14 000 people whose asylum applications were rejected and who did not receive subsidiary status or were no longer eligible to remain in the EU. This was about a third more than the previous year and accounted for 9 % of the 151 398 effective returns conducted by Member States. To help address the challenges of returns, Frontex has a pool of return experts at the disposal of Member States organising return operations.

Another key element of successful migration management is cooperation with the countries of origin and transit of migrants. From exchange of information to cooperation on returns, Frontex has been increasingly active beyond the European Union. The Agency continues to strengthen its relations with the border authorities of third countries, especially on topics related to security issues.

In 2017, Frontex deployed additional liaison officers to non-EU countries – Niger and Serbia. The agency also has a liaison officer in Turkey. These officers work with the national authorities to strengthen cooperation in the fields related to border management and monitor the flows on key migratory routes outside the EU. Frontex will continue to develop the network of liaison officers in countries outside the EU.

The sea, especially along the Mediterranean routes, will remain the most active path for illegal crossing of the EU external borders, but also one of the most dangerous for migrant smuggling requiring humanitarian assistance efforts. Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, is leading the way to enhance the cooperation among various maritime security players, leading to additional coordination in search and rescue efforts, as well as other coast guard functions related to border control. As a result, border control authorities are increasingly involved in detection of cross-border crimes, such as drug trafficking and smuggling of excise goods, but also the detection of pollution and illegal fishing. While these synergies create new opportunities, they also require scaling up of border resources.

Together with EU-Lisa and Europol, Frontex is already preparing for the implementation of the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), whose core function will be to provide an additional layer of control over travellers by determining the eligibility of all visa-exempt non-EU nationals to travel to the Schengen Area. Frontex will host the Central Unit of ETIAS, which will help improve internal security, limit public health risks and identify persons who may pose a risk before they arrive at the EU's external borders.

Amid its expanding role in the areas of border control and security, Frontex has reorganised to reflect its many new responsibilities. Just over the last year, the Agency has grown by a third, to a staff of more than 530, and it will more than double by 2020. Together with its many partners, the growing European Border and Coast Guard Agency remains committed to tackling the many challenges outlined in this report, helping ensure security of Europe's external borders, EU Member States and European citizens.

Fabrice Leggeri
Executive Director

2. Summary

In 2017, Member States reported a further drop in the detections of illegal border-crossing along the EU's external borders, with 204 719 detections recorded that year. This represents a 60 % decrease compared with the 511 047 detections of 2016 (and an 89 % decrease compared with the 1.8 million detections at the height of the migratory crisis in 2015).

This decrease was in particular associated with a significant drop in detections on the Eastern Mediterranean (and secondary to it the Western Balkan route) and on the Central Mediterranean route. The strong rise in detections on the Western Mediterranean route, the displacement effects on the other routes and the absolute number of detections, which exceeds any total recorded in recent history before the year 2014, together indicate that the pressure on the EU's external border remains high.

The sudden reversal in the numbers of irregular migrants detected on the Central Mediterranean in July 2017 is arguably the most significant development at the EU's external borders since the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement. The numbers in the first half of 2017 roughly mirrored those reported in 2016 at an elevated level, but in July, mostly due to internal developments in Libya, the numbers dropped suddenly to less than half the level of June. An even more marked relative decrease, to almost a third of that level, was registered in August; the numbers remained at a much lower level throughout the rest of the year. Unrelated to the decrease in departures from Libya, more boats successfully left from the shores of Tunisia and Algeria in the third and forth quarters.

At the EU's external border with Turkey, the migratory pressure in 2017 remained roughly on a level with the months after the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement.

The number of migrants detected on the Western Mediterranean route hit a new record high in 2017, more than doubling the previous record of last year. While during much of the first half of the year the numbers were on a par with those reported during the last months of 2016, the flow reached a new level in June of the year. Domestic issues in Morocco, the main transit country for migrants heading to Spain, created an opening for more departures from Morocco's western coast in particular, which starting from the second quarter of the year led to the use of high-capacity boats able to transport large numbers of migrants.

Corresponding to the changes in the migratory routes, the relative share of African nationals increased compared with 2016, driven by fast-growing numbers of migrants from Maghreb countries (notably Moroccans, Algerians and Tunisians) in the latter part of the year. As a result, African nationals accounted for almost two-thirds of irregular migrants arriving at the shores of the EU.

Regional differences are notable, however, as the number of Eastern African nationals fell by a lot more than the relative decline in numbers caused by the curb imposed by developments in Libya would suggest: the numbers of Eritreans, Somalis and Ethiopians for instance fell to roughly a fourth of their 2016 numbers.

In 2017, Member States reported a total of 6 700 individuals from third countries who presented themselves with fraudulent documents at BCPs on entry to the EU/ Schengen area. In contrast to the decreasing trend observed at the external EU border, the number of document fraud detections on secondary movements within the EU/Schengen area increased by more than 10 % and reached one of the highest numbers since 2013.

Member States reported a drop in illegal stay between 2016 and 2017, the second year in a row when a decrease in the number of illegal stayers was recorded. This trend mirrored the fall in numbers of illegal border-crossings at the EU's external borders.

Despite a steady number of return decisions compared with 2016, in 2017 Member States continued to struggle to effectively return those whose asylum application was rejected and who were not granted subsidiary protection status. While the effective returns of European and American migrants stayed roughly on a par with last year, the number of migrants returned to Africa and Asia fell further. Returns to West Africa continue to show the lowest ratio between effective returns and return decisions. In the meantime, the Agency offers Member States increased support in organising return operations, having returned more than 14 000 persons in 2017, which represents a 32 % increase compared with the previous year.

Looking ahead, irregular migration by sea, and more specifically along the Mediterranean routes, will remain the main *modus operandi* for illegally crossing the EU's, external borders, and also one of the most dangerous forms of mi-
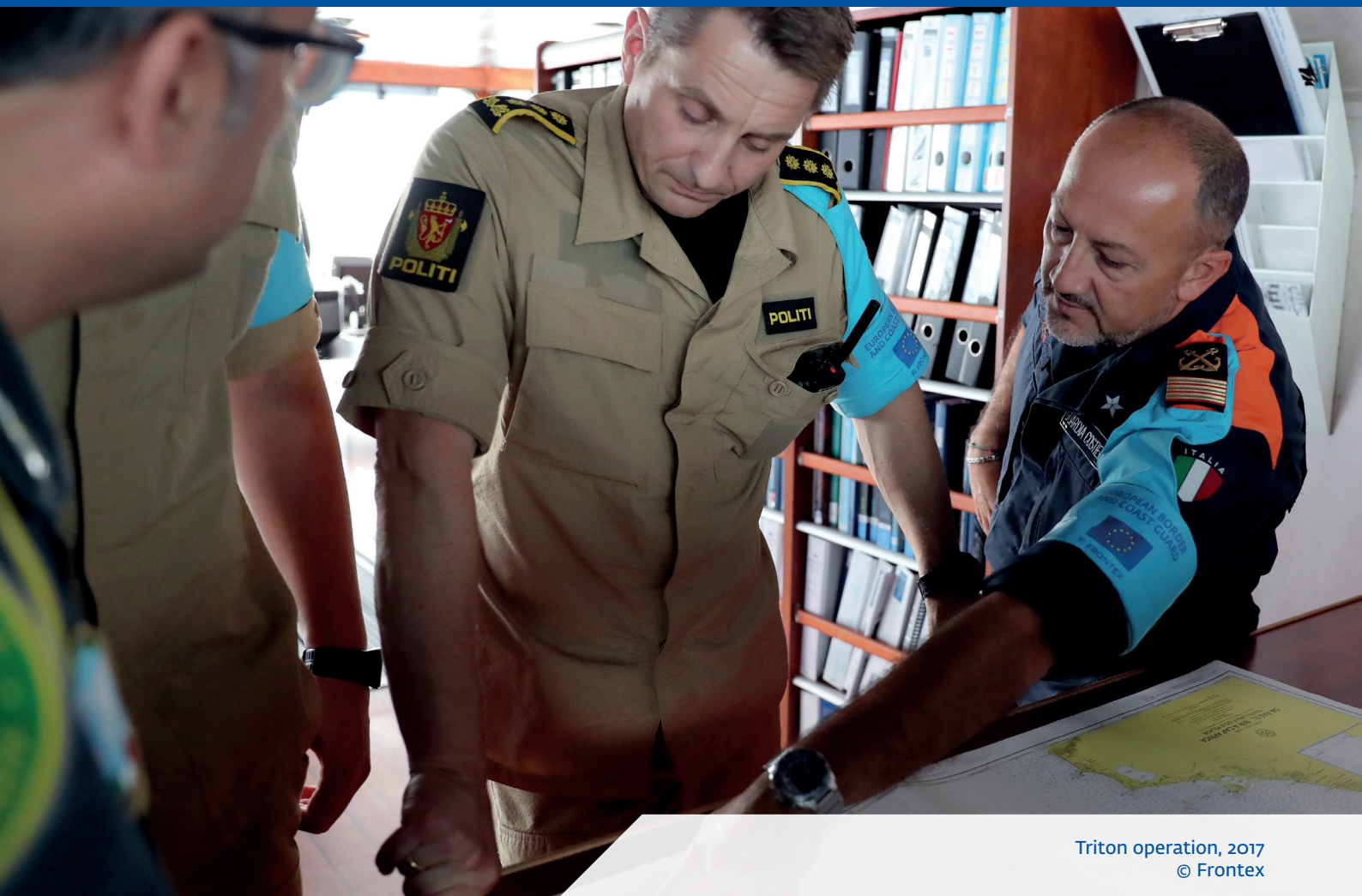
Triton operation, 2017
© Frontex

grant smuggling requiring humanitarian assistance efforts. To tackle this phenomenon, cooperation among maritime security players and the shared use of assets are gaining momentum. Border control authorities are increasingly confronted with the detection of cross-border crimes such as drug trafficking and the smuggling of excise goods, but also the detection of pollution and fisheries issues. While synergies offer opportunities, they also require adaptation and scaling-up of border and coast guard resources.

At the same time, border-control authorities are expected to be increasingly engaged in search and rescue operations covering vast areas of the Mediterranean Sea, as well as being the first point of contact for a growing number of vulnerable persons. The proportion of African migrants, and in particular West African migrants, detected crossing the border illegally is likely to grow.

Swift diversification of *modi operandi*, displacement between routes or border types, and attempts to evade detection or identification are all likely to occur in response to enhanced surveillance and migration control. While until recently, migrants detected at the border could swiftly continue to their final destinations unhindered, the emerging pattern is that migrants who go undetected can arrive at their destination quickly; it also means that they do not have to bear the consequences of being detected for illegal stay or being refused asylum. Hence, the number of migrants undertaking secondary movements is also expected to rise.

Regular passenger flows across the external border will increase significantly in the coming years due to rising global mobility. Border-control authorities will have to take on more responsibilities as a consequence of visa liberalisation processes and local border traffic agreements. Border management will increasingly be risk-based, to ensure that interventions are focused on the movements of high-risk individuals, while movements of bona fide travellers are facilitated smoothly.

Given the increasing level of security features in modern travel documents and stricter migration policies across Member States, the misuse of genuine travel documents (which includes impersonation and fraudulently obtained documents) is likely to be an entry method which will become more widespread.

Finally, there is an underlying threat of terrorism-related travel movements and it is possible that foreign terrorist fighters use irregular migration routes or facilitation networks.

3. Introduction

The Frontex Risk Analysis for 2018 has been specifically designed to provide an overview which will help make informed decisions on both common European investments and concerted actions to improve the management of external borders and uphold the internal security of the Union.

Frontex operational activities aim at strengthening border security through the coordination of Member States' actions regarding the 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 and better protection of the area of freedom, security and justice. In this context, the Risk Analysis for 2018 concentrates on the scope of Frontex operational activities and, in particular, on irregular migration at the external borders of the EU and Schengen Associated Countries.

Since the Regulation (EU) 2016 / 1624 came into effect, the mandate of Frontex has been significantly enhanced to ensure efficient implementation of European Integrated Border Management as a shared responsibility of the Union, the Agency and of the national authorities.

The European Integrated Border Management consists of 11 strategic components defined in Article 4 of the Agency's Regulation. These are: border control, including measures in relation to trafficking in human beings and terrorism, search and rescue operations, analysis of risks for internal security, cooperation with Member States, inter-agency cooperation, cooperation with third countries, measures within the Schengen area related to border control, return of third-country nationals, use of state-of-the-art technology, quality control mechanisms and solidarity mechanisms.

Clearly, this major change has important implications for the analytical work performed by Frontex as its risk analysis should cover all aspects of Integrated Border Management and develop a pre-warning mechanism. Therefore, as much as possible, these new elements have been integrated into this annual risk analysis.

This annual report is structured as follows: (1) situational picture with emphasis on identified migratory trends and surveillance activities utilising a set of reliable indicators on irregular migration; (2) featured analyses on key risks affecting the security of the external borders and / or internal security; (3) presentation of outlook; and finally (4) highlights on the main types of risks at the external borders.

The Agency and in particular its Risk Analysis Unit (RAU) would like to express its gratitude to all members of the Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) in Member States for their efforts in providing data and information, as well as Europol, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), and all colleagues involved in the preparation of this report.

Frontex Situation Centre, 2017
© Frontex

4. Methodology

A coherent and comprehensive analysis of the risks affecting security at the external borders requires, above all, the adoption of common indicators. Consistent monitoring of these indicators will allow effective measures to be taken on the ground. The analysis needs to identify the risks that arise at the external borders themselves and those that arise in third countries.

The backbone of the *Risk Analysis for 2018* is the monthly statistics exchanged among Member States within the framework of the FRAN. For the *Risk Analysis for 2018*, the key indicators collected through the FRAN were: detections of illegal border-crossing through the green border or 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). Data on asylum applications are still being collected within the FRAN, but Frontex increasingly relies on data collected by EASO, which has contributed to the dedicated section on asylum.

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. The data exchanged within the FRAN are compiled and analysed on a quarterly basis. Priority is given to the use of the data for management purposes and to their fast sharing among Member State border-control authorities.

Member States' data processed by Frontex are not treated as official statis-

tics and thus may occasionally vary from those officially published by national authorities. Throughout 2017, some FRAN members performed backdated updates of their 2016 statistics. These updates have been accounted for in this document, hence some data presented here may differ from those presented a year ago in the *Risk Analysis for 2017*.

Member States were not requested to answer specific questions in support of this analysis. Rather, bimonthly analytical reports and incident reports of Member States routinely collected within the FRAN, as well as other Member States' contributions submitted in 2017 were important sources of information, especially as regards the analysis of routes and *modi operandi*. Additionally, the outcomes of debriefing activities carried

out in the framework of Joint Operations constituted essential analytical material.

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

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. For the indicators on detections of facilitators, illegal stay and asylum, statistics are also reported for detections at the land borders between Schengen Member States and those Member States that have either not joined the Schengen area yet (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Romania) or have opted to stay out of it (the United Kingdom, Ireland). Thus, a total for Member States and Schengen Associated Countries as a whole can be presented. It was not possible to make the aforementioned 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.

Consistent with other law-enforcement indicators, variation in administrative data related to border control depends on several factors. In this case, the number of detections of illegal border-crossing 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 in fact be an outcome of more resources made available to detect them. In exceptional cases, increased resources may produce a rise in reported detections while effectively masking the actual decrease in the irregular migratory flow, resulting from a strong deterrent effect.

5. Situational picture in 2017

5.1. Main trends

In 2017, illegal border-crossings dropped to the lowest aggregate number since 2013, in particular due to a significant decrease in detections on the Eastern Mediterranean and secondary to it on the Western Balkan route. While the comparison on the annual basis shows that these two routes had the the most significant decline in absolute numbers, arguably, after the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement and regaining control of the Western Balkan transit corridor, the most significant development took place on the Central Mediterranean route. On this route, a sudden reversal took place in July 2017 which led to a marked drop in the number of detections of illegal border-crossing. Against these notable decreases in numbers, however, the rise in detections on the Western Mediterranean stands out. In particular the development on the Western Mediterranean and the noticeable diversion effects in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean would suggest that while the actual pressure on the external borders remained high, effective action taken by Member States and the EU prevented this pressure from materialising.

According to EASO, in 2017, as many as 701 997 applications for international protection were lodged in the 28 EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland (EU+).[1] This represents half the number of applications that were lodged in the EU+ during the previous year. Of the applicants in 2017, 8 % had previously submitted an application in the same EU+ reporting country (repeated applicants).

In 2017, the reported detections of illegal border-crossing remained consistently lower than the level of applications, suggesting that some of the applicants for international protection had entered Europe earlier, crossed the border undetected, or under a visa-free scheme. Some evidence suggests that the second and third reasons led to increases, although it is difficult to quantify these phenomena.

In 2017, there were over 111 823 withdrawn applications, a 36 % decrease compared with 2016.[2] The two main countries receiving applications – Germany and Italy – together accounted for half of all withdrawals.

In 2017, border-control authorities for the Schengen area continued to devote the majority of their efforts to entry and exit checks. This obligation increased significantly in 2017 when a regulation was adopted obliging Member States to carry out systematic checks against relevant databases on all persons, including those enjoying the right of free movement under EU law when they cross the external borders. The amendment to the Schengen Borders Code came into

---

1   At the time of writing, data for December 2017 were available for 25 of the 30 EU+ countries. Missing data for December for Bulgaria, Greece, Malta, Portugal and Romania where supplemented with weekly estimates. Similarly, weekly estimates were used for the missing monthly data of Cyprus (January and March), Malta (June and November) and Portugal (November).

2   In line with Art. 27 and 28 of the recast Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU), an application can be withdrawn either explicitly (where the applicant informs officially the determining body of their wish to discontinue their application) or implicitly (where an applicant can no longer be located and is judged to have abandoned the procedure). At the time of writing, data for December 2017 were available for 26 of the 30 EU+ countries.

Latest situation 2017
Reported cases

(2016)
2017

(2 219) **1 618**	🟠	Detections of illegal border-crossing at BCPs
(7 042) **6 725**	🔵	Detections of fraudulent document users
(12 621) **10 213**	🟤	Detections of facilitators
(175 377) **151 398**	🟢	Returns (effective)
(215 403) **183 548**	⚫	Refusals of entry
(511 047) **204 719**	🟠	Detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs
(305 463) **279 215**	🟢	Returns (decisions)
(491 918) **435 786**	🔵	Detections of persons staying illegally

effect on 7 April 2017. While this has significantly impacted the work of border guards, so did ever-increasing passenger flows, which continue to be driven by visa liberalisation and local border traffic agreements as well as ever-increasing passenger numbers. These are most visible at the air borders as a result of increased mobility and the rapid expansion of the supply of more affordable flight options.

As regards to visa liberalisation, the most significant development was the decision to transfer Ukraine to the list of third countries whose nationals (using a biometric passport) are exempt from visa requirements, which came into effect on 11 June 2017. For the three months post-visa liberalisation (July-September), the size of the passenger flow of Ukrainians heading to the Schengen area increased by 15 % compared with the same period one year before. Georgian citizens holding a biometric passport are also exempt from the visa requirement since 28 March 2017.

Concerning the passenger flow at the air border, Eurostat data – the latest available data being that for 2016 – suggests a continuation of the gradual year-to-year increase in passenger transport by air, albeit not as fast as in the previous couple of years. The EU-28 data (excluding Greece and the United Kingdom for incomplete datasets for 2016) showed a 1.5 % increase compared with a 4.4 % increase from 2014 to 2015 (for EU-28).

At the land border, for the 13 Member States reporting data to Frontex, the number of passengers increased from 110 337 008 (in 2016) to 112 468 517 (in 2017). The Croatian external land border – in particular the border section with Bosnia and Herzegovina – continued to receive an inward passenger traffic far beyond that of other Member States, remaining roughly at 35 million in 2017.

In 2016, 13.9 million short-term uniform Schengen visas were issued, a decrease of almost 3 % compared with 2015. This further fall in issued short-term uniform Schengen visa was due to a variety of factors: for instance, a visa waiver agreement for Colombians, which came into effect in December 2015, led to a decrease in the number of visas issued to them by over 120 000 between 2015 and 2016. Likewise, a short-stay visa waiver agreement with Peru entered into effect in March 2016, which resulted in a drop in the aggregate number of visas by another 50 000. Other significant changes in absolute numbers were a decline of over 220 000 visas for Chinese citizens, a further drop in Russian visas by over 310 000 and an increase in visas issued to Ukrainians by over 170 000.

In 2017, a total of 183 548 refusals of entry were reported at the external borders of the EU, a fall of 15 % compared with 2016.

In 2017, Member States reported around 6 700 persons fraudulently using documents at the external borders, the lowest number since 2012. By contrast, the number of document fraud detections within the EU/Schengen area increased by almost 9 % and reached its second highest number since 2013.

The number of detections of illegal stay – 435 786 reported by Member States – fell by 11 % for the second year in a row after the year of the height when the migration crisis reached its peak (2015). In 2017, too, illegal stayers were largely detected on secondary movements; they were migrants who entered the EU/Schengen area on the Central Mediterranean route.

In 2017, facilitators, who continue to pose a serious threat to the EU, managed to successfully operate mostly out of third countries and thus, mostly out of the reach of Member States' law enforcement agencies. Overall, the number of reported facilitators fell by 19 %, a decline partly explained by the modi operandi newly adopted by smuggling networks and the general increase in their level of sophistication. Europol noted that more sophisticated and dangerous methods are used by criminals to smuggle migrants across borders. For instance, cases of migrants being detected in purpose-built, airtight compartments in vans, lorries, cars and cargo trains are increasingly reported.

Despite reporting a steady number of return decisions compared with 2016, Member States continued to struggle to effectively return those whose asylum application was rejected and who were not granted subsidiary protection status. While the effective returns of European and American migrants stayed roughly on a par with last year, the number of migrants returned to Africa and Asia fell further. Particularly, returns to West Africa continue to show the lowest ratio between effective returns and return decisions.
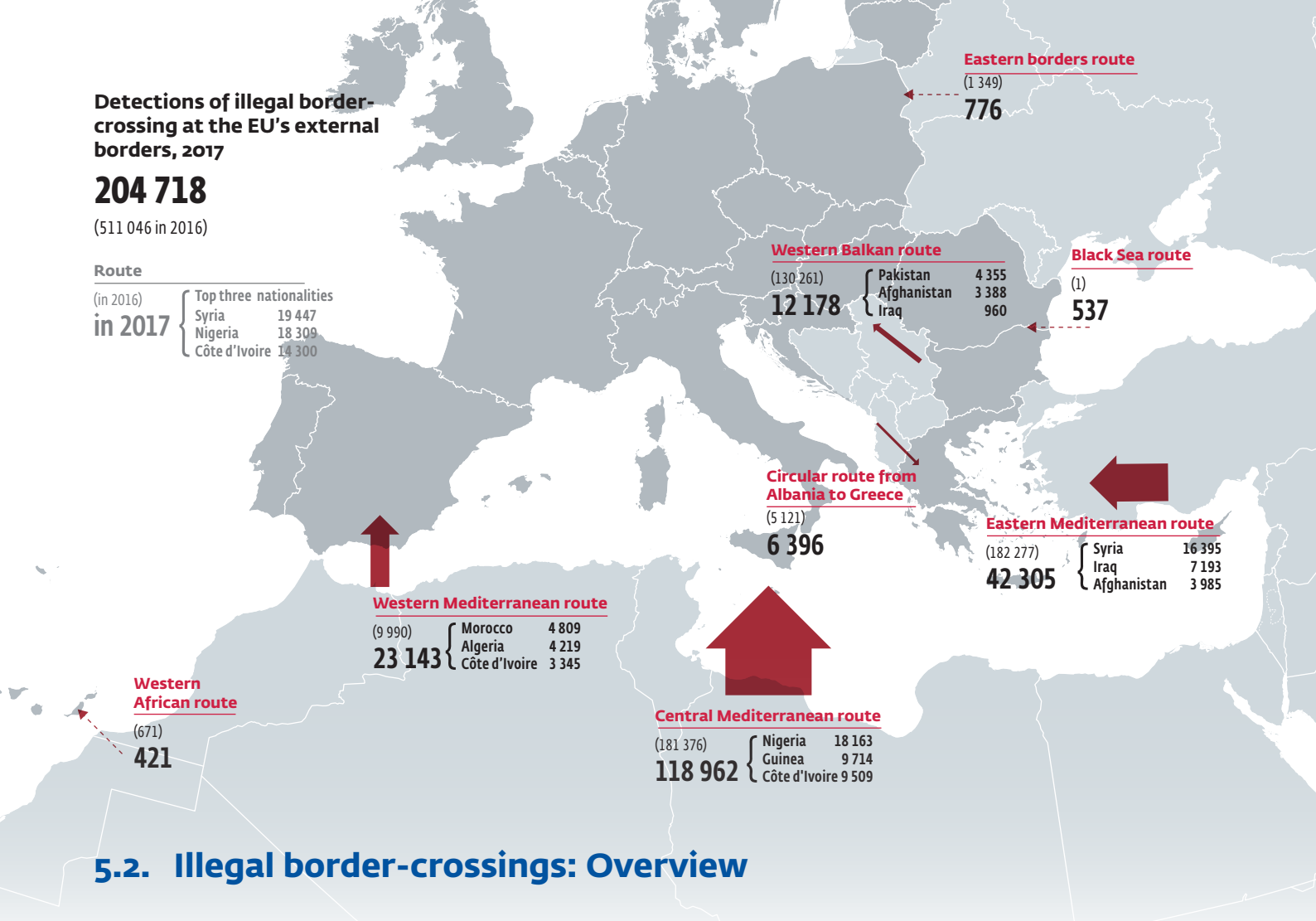
Detections of illegal border-crossing at the EU's external borders, 2017

204 718

(511 046 in 2016)

Route

(in 2016)
in 2017

Top three nationalities
Syria 19 447
Nigeria 18 309
Côte d'Ivoire 14 300

Eastern borders route
(1 349)
776

Western Balkan route
(130 261)
12 178
Pakistan 4 355
Afghanistan 3 388
Iraq 960

Black Sea route
(1)
537

Circular route from Albania to Greece
(5 121)
6 396

Eastern Mediterranean route
(182 277)
42 305
Syria 16 395
Iraq 7 193
Afghanistan 3 985

Western Mediterranean route
(9 990)
23 143
Morocco 4 809
Algeria 4 219
Côte d'Ivoire 3 345

Western African route
(671)
421

Central Mediterranean route
(181 376)
118 962
Nigeria 18 163
Guinea 9 714
Côte d'Ivoire 9 509

5.2. Illegal border-crossings: Overview

For the second year in a row after the record year of 2015, Member States reported a significant decrease in the numbers of detections of illegal border-crossing along the EU's external borders. The 204 719 detections reported by Member States in 2017 represent a 60 % decrease compared with the 511 047 detections of 2016. However, this should not distract from the fact that the aggregate exceeds any total reported in FRAN history before the year 2014, an indicator that the migratory pressure on the EU's external borders remained very high in 2017. This decrease mostly resulted from the lower number of detections recorded on the Eastern Mediterranean, the Western Balkan and the Central Mediterranean routes.
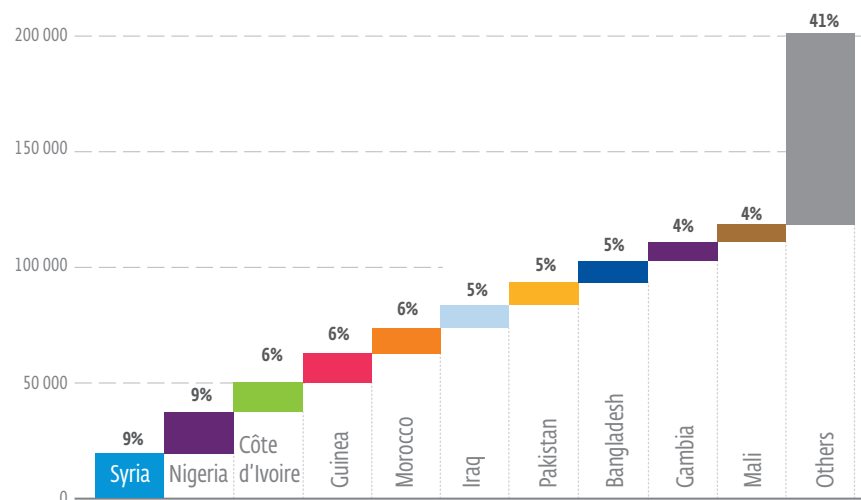
Central Mediterranean route

The number of irregular migrants detected on the Central Mediterranean route at the beginning of 2017 roughly mirrored that seen at the beginning of 2016, with fluctuations very much dependent on weather conditions in the winter months. After January, however, the registered numbers were at an elevated level compared with 2016 due to even higher migratory pressure from Libya than in the year before. A trend similar to that observed in 2016 continued until June 2017 (23 461 in June 2017 versus 22 344 in June 2016). In July 2017, the numbers dropped suddenly and markedly to less than half the level of June and July (11 460), followed by an even larger fall to almost a third of that level in August (3 914). A variety of factors, notably internal developments in Libya, are deemed to be the cause, not a decline in the pool of migrants looking to use the route. Hence, with 118 962 migrants detected in 2017, a fall of 34 % compared with 2016 was reported, meaning that the Central Mediterranean still recorded by far the largest number of irregular migrants. In the second part of the year, migrants were increasingly prevented from departing from Libya. At the same time, but unrelated to the decrease in the flow from Libya, more Tunisians and Algerians embarked boats in their

Figure 1. **Detections of illegal border-crossing, by main nationalities (scale in absolute numbers, with labels showing percentages of total) in 2017**

respective countries and headed to Sicily and Sardinia. Finally, the Turkey-Italy maritime corridor remained open to smugglers, who nevertheless transported fewer migrants in 2017.

Eastern Mediterranean route

At the EU's external border with Turkey, the migratory pressure in 2017 remained roughly on a level with the months after the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement (ranging from 1 601 to 7 136 detected illegal border-crossings per month in 2017). Therefore, the statement has continued to prevent a large share of departures. Regarding the sea border, the comparison between preventions of departures and apprehensions seems to indicate that the overall number of attempts to cross the Eastern Aegean reached a higher level, particularly in September. On the Greek land border with Turkey, 5 540 reported illegal border-crossings represented the highest number of detections since 2012. This is, alongside the temporary re-emergence of detections in the Black Sea, the outcome of diversion effects as the route via the Eastern Aegean islands is becoming less attractive, while at the same time a large pool of potential migrants remain stranded in Turkey. Furthermore, strengthened controls on the Western Balkan route and both the number of people stuck on the Hotspot islands and the Greek mainland and/or their waiting time means that the amount of document fraud detections at Greek air borders

to Western Europe, as well as the smuggling activity via the Ionian Sea (1 465), increased.

Black Sea route

The Black Sea route was temporarily used in 2017, with 537 migrants detected on the Black Sea between August and November, accounting for the highest number of migrants ever detected on this route since 2009.

Western Balkan route

The flow of migrants across the Western Balkans continued to somewhat reflect the influx on the Eastern Mediterranean route, yet at a lower level compared with previous years given the continuing efforts made on the route to curb the flow. The detected illegal border-crossings at the EU's external border mostly took place at the Serbian borders, with many migrants stranded in Serbia known to make several attempts to cross, often at different border sections.

Western Mediterranean route

The numbers of migrants detected on the Western Mediterranean route hit a new record high in 2017, more than doubling the previous record of last year. While during much of the first half of the year the numbers were on a par with those reported during the last months of 2016, the flow reached new levels in

June 2017. In the latter part of the year, the observed increased usage of rubber dinghies east of the Strait of Gibraltar – used by sub-Saharan migrants – suggests increased activity of people smuggling networks, as the dinghies and the required engines are unlikely to have been procured by the (mostly sub-Saharan) migrants themselves.

Western African route

On the Western African route, the 421 detected irregular migrants represent the lowest number since 2015. The low number on the route connecting Senegal, Mauritania and Morocco with the Spanish Canary Islands is a success to be attributed to the Memorandum of Understanding between Spain, Senegal and Mauritania, which continued to deliver joint surveillance activities and effective returns of people detected crossing the border illegally.

Eastern land border route

In 2017, the Eastern land border reported the lowest number of illegal border-crossings since the inception of FRAN data collection. In particular, at the land borders with Russia the numbers dropped, indicating that the Russian authorities are continuing good cooperation with the respective Member States' local authorities. More than one-third of detected migrants were Vietnamese citizens.

**Detections of illegal border-crossing at BCPs
by border section (people hiding in vehicles), 2017**

1 618 (2 219)

Number in parenthesis is for 2016

◆ 200

5.3. Clandestine entries

In 2017, the number of detections of clandestine entry (people hiding in vehicles to avoid border control) at BCPs remained much lower than the number of detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs. There was a significant decrease (-27 %) in detections of clandestine entry compared with 2016, from 2 219 to 1 618. However, it is unlikely that the attempts to enter the EU's external borders actually decreased given the measures taken to control irregular migration between BCPs (which should increase the incentive to attempt clandestine entry), and so this number may well be an indication that more attempts of clandestine entry were successful.

The fall in the numbers of detected clandestine entries is due to two opposing phenomena: at the Bulgarian land border with Turkey, detections fell to almost an eighth of the number of 2016, whereas at the Croatian land border with Serbia the detections rose significantly. The latter is likely connected to a significant fall at the Hungarian land border with Serbia, which likely created the diversion effect at the Croatian border.

In terms of the nationalities of migrants detected trying to enter clandestinely, two saw significant changes. The number of Afghan nationals increased considerably (from 233 in 2016 to 489 in 2017) whereas the number of Syrians decreased significantly (from 667 to 113).

The fall in detections of clandestine entries at the EU's land border with Turkey raises questions about the effectiveness of checks. In light of this and taking into account the fact that thoroughly checking all vehicles would introduce undue waiting time for many *bona fide* travellers, the advancement of operational risk analysis techniques for better results of targeted checks must be considered anew. The role of pooled intelligence at EU-level, as well as technical and other support to Member States, is in this regard paramount.
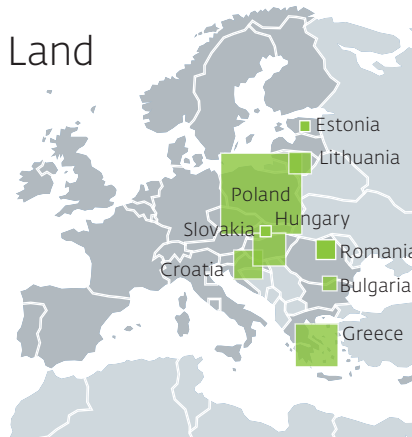

© European Commission

Figure 2. **A Hungarian police officer sets a sensor of a heart beat detector and a flexible camera to search for irregular migrants during control of a lorry at the border between Hungary and Serbia near Röszke**

126 502 (162 302)

Number in parenthesis is for 2016

49 378 (46 663)

Number in parenthesis is for 2016
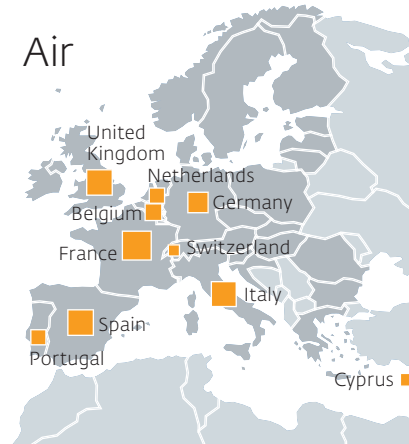
6 438 (7 668)

Number in parenthesis is for 2016

Land

Air

Sea

Trend of the total

	Land		Air		Sea	
2016	162 302		46 663			6 438
2017	126 502		49 378			7 668

5.4. Refusals of entry

In 2017, a total of 183 548 refusals of entry were reported along the external borders of the EU, a 15 % drop compared with 2016 and thus, an even smaller share of the increasing passenger flow. While Poland issued the most refusals of entry, their number dropped most in relative and absolute terms due to drops in refusals of Russians, Tajiks and Armenians. Nonetheless, the number of refusals of entry issued by Greece more than doubled, a development entirely resulting from the increased refusals issued to Albanians. This increasing trend of refusals of entry issued to Albanians was observed at EU level at all border types starting in 2014 (Figure 3).

The overall fall in the refusals of entry was the effect of differing, opposing trends observed at the different border types – while refusals at both air (+6 %) and sea borders (+19 %) increased significantly, the drop at land border (-22 %) outweighed both, as the number of refusals reported at this type of border is twice as large as the number recorded at both air and sea borders.

At sea borders, the increases were particularly marked at the Italian ports of Bari and Brindsi, and the Spanish port of Tarifa. Given the connections from the aforementioned ports, the top nationalities refused entry at sea borders were Albanians (from 3 744 to 4 521 refusals) followed by Moroccans (from 985 to 1 830 refusals).

At the land border, the significant decrease in refusals of entry almost entirely resulted from the decreases reported at the Polish-Belarusian land border. Compared with 2016, the number of refusals decreased in particular with regard to Russians (by 44 973), as well as Tajiks (4 632).

At the air border, the number of refusals of entry issued to citizens of Albania increased from 5 141 in 2016 to 6 577 in 2017.

Since 2009, refusals at the sea and air borders remained relatively stable, despite incresing passenger flow at the air border. At the land border, where most refusals take place, a sharp decreased was reported between 2016 and 207, mostly due to the decreasing number of Russians refused entry.

Figure 3. **Trend in refusals of entry at the EU's external borders, by border type, 2011–2017**
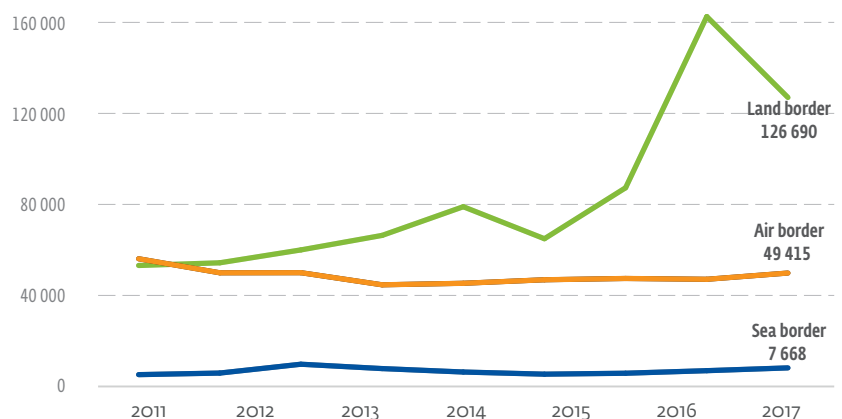
Type

Type of fraudulent document detected, by main countries of issuance, 2017

Number

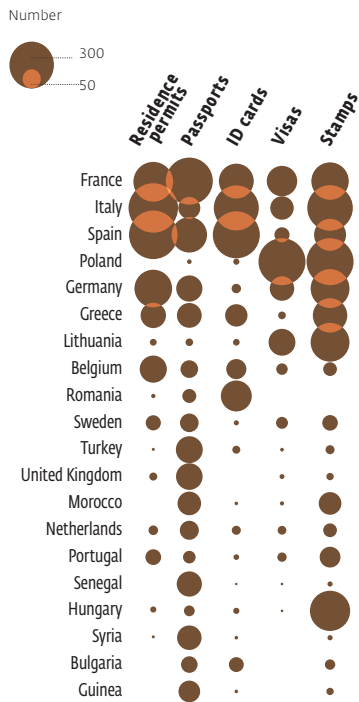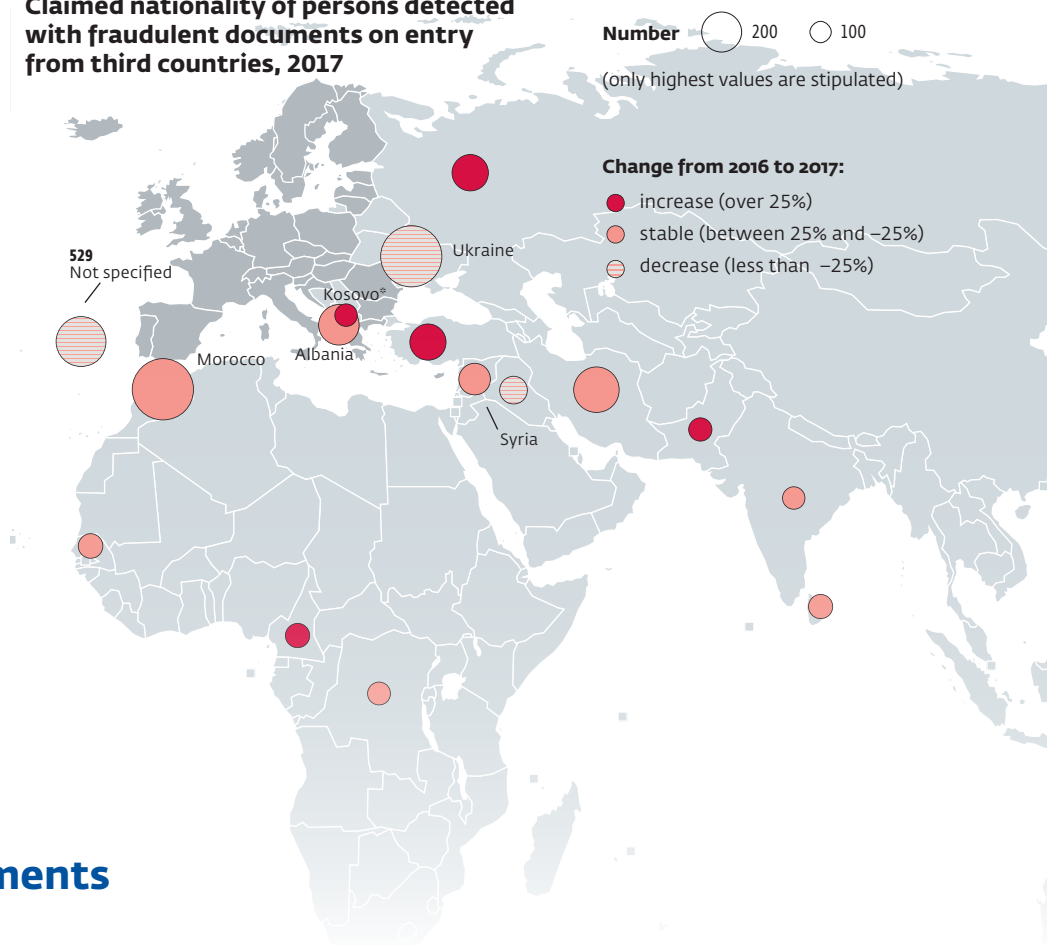|	Residence permits	Passports	ID cards	Visas	Stamps
France					
Italy					
Spain					
Poland					
Germany					
Greece					
Lithuania					
Belgium					
Romania					
Sweden					
Turkey					
United Kingdom					
Morocco					
Netherlands					
Portugal					
Senegal					
Hungary					
Syria					
Bulgaria					
Guinea					

Nationality of users

Claimed nationality of persons detected with fraudulent documents on entry from third countries, 2017

Number ○ 200 ○ 100
(only highest values are stipulated)

Change from 2016 to 2017:
● increase (over 25%)
● stable (between 25% and −25%)
◐ decrease (less than −25%)

529 Not specified

Morocco Albania Kosovo* Ukraine Syria

5.5. Fraudulent documents

In 2017, Member States reported a total of about 6 700[1] persons from third-countries presenting themselves with fraudulent documents at BCPs on entry to the EU/Schengen area, the lowest number of detections since 2013, despite the increasing regular passenger flows. In contrast to the decreasing trend observed at the EU's external border, the number of document fraud detections on secondary movements within the EU/Schengen area increased by almost 9 % and reached its second-highest number since 2013. This development mainly resulted from the significant increases in departures from Greece involving Syrian, Afghan, Iraqi, Turkish and Iranian nationals.

At EU level, of the 138 nationalities detected using fraudulent documents to illegally enter the EU or the Schengen area from a third country, the most commonly detected were Moroccans (803), Ukrainians (801), Iranians (438), Albanians (346), Russians (278) and Turks (275).

A remarkable development was recorded with regard to the detected Ukrainians, whose numbers dropped significantly compared with the previous year. As a result, Moroccan nationals became the most reported nationality using fraudulent documents. Apart from these two nationalities, the number of Iranians detected with fraudulent documents crossing the EU's external borders started increasing. To a certain extent, this is caused by the visa-free regime granted to Iranian nationals by the Serbian authorities. In general, there were no significant changes to the top five most reported nationalities detected with fraudulent documents on entry to the EU/Schengen area from third countries, apart from the fact that Russians replaced Iraqis in comparison to the previous year. Also, the number of Russian nationals detected in 2017 almost doubled that registered in 2016.

Istanbul Atatürk Airport remains the top departure airport for detections of fraudulent documents from third countries

As in the previous year, most detections were reported on air routes. At 477 detections, the number of document fraud cases from Istanbul Atatürk decreased by 23 % compared with 2016. Despite reporting the lowest number of document fraud cases since 2013, Istanbul Atatürk airport, remains the most reported last departure airport outside the EU/Schengen area.

The second-most reported last departure airport remained Dakar International Airport in Senegal with 222 detected persons using fraudulent documents to cross the EU's external border; Senegalese nationals were most often detected on the above mentioned routes.

Compared to 2016, in 2017 more detections were reported at EU level on arrival from Tirana's airport.

1   As of 19 January 2018, December 2017 data missing for Bulgaria

At land and sea borders, most detections of document fraud were from Ukraine, Serbia and Morocco

In 2017, most of the document fraud cases at land borders were reported between Ukraine and Poland (519), mainly involving Ukrainian nationals holding fraudulently-obtained Polish visas. However, the visa liberalisation regime for Ukrainian nationals, which entered into force in June 2017, had also contributed to the decrease in the number of Ukrainians misusing fraudulently obtained visas.

With regard to the external sea borders, no change was observed in comparison to previous years. The sea border between Spain and Morocco remains most affected, with Ceuta as the most reported BCP and Moroccan nationals as the main nationality.

On exit to third countries Ukraine remains the most-reported destination, followed by Canada

Typically, land borders with Ukraine are affected and as regards the air routes, mostly Canada is targeted as the intended final destination. At the land border with Ukraine, most detections concerned counterfeited stamps to conceal overstaying. At the air borders, the types of forgeries are more diverse, and so are the risks associated with these detections.
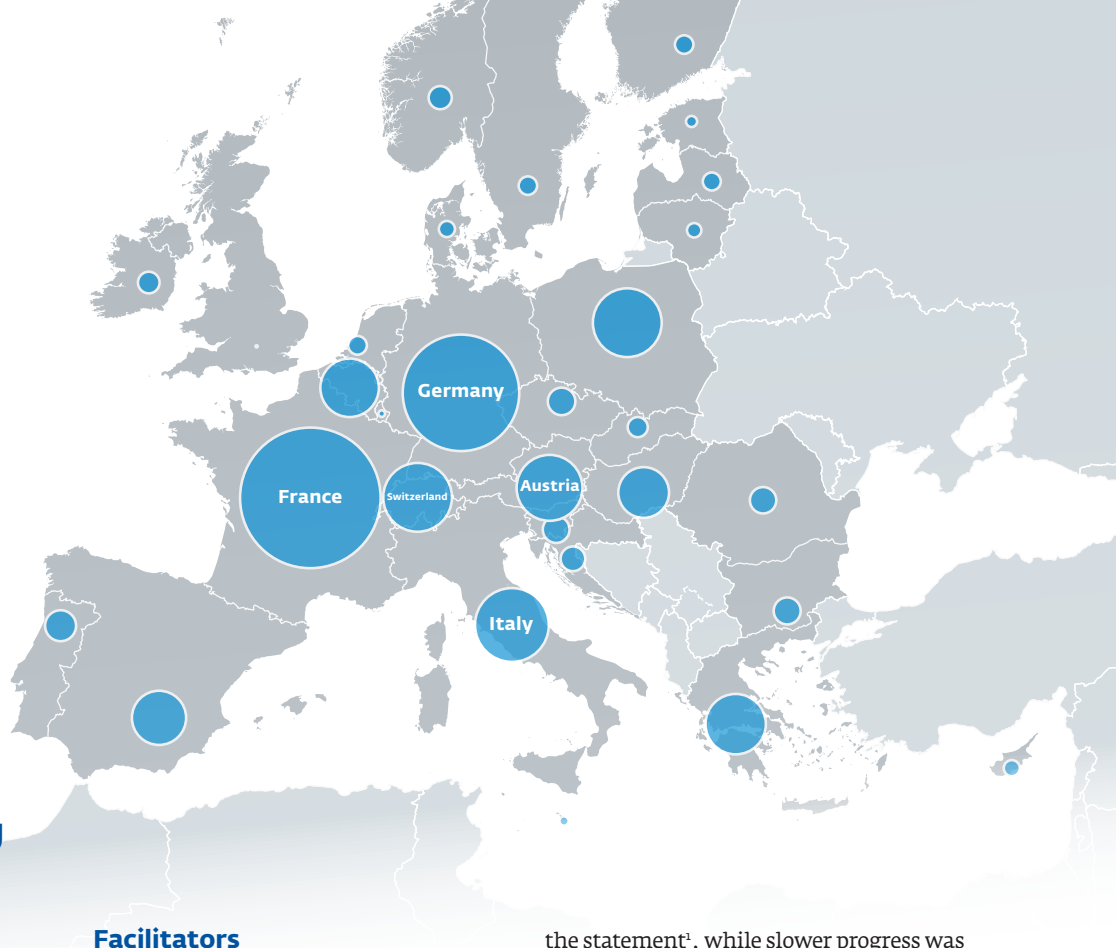

© Frontex

Figure 4. **Automated Border Control systems provide a fast and secure solution for airports and border control authorities**

Illegal stayers

Number of detected cases of illegal stay, 2017

435 786 (491 918)

Number in parenthesis is for 2016

50 000

(only highest values are displayed)

Germany

France

Switzerland

Austria

Italy

5.6. Within the EU

Illegal stayers

In 2017, Member States reported a drop in illegal stay compared with 2016, the second year in a row with a decrease in illegal stay numbers. This is mostly connected with the lower numbers of detected illegal border-crossings at the EU's external borders, as the illegal stay detections are primarily a reflection of them. Despite the significant decrease since 2015, the high absolute number indicates the persistence of the problem. The majority of detections continue to be associated with the spillover effect of secondary movements of migrants who entered the EU/Schengen area on the Central Mediterranean route. On the other hand, the number of persons detected on exit at BCPs at the EU's external borders without a valid permission to stay remained roughly on a par with 2016.

Inland detections of illegal stay decreased particularly in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, as well as Bulgaria. The share of illegal stayers increased in France, which therefore replaced Germany as the country with the highest number of illegal stay cases.

Facilitators

Member States reported 10 213 facilitators in 2017, a 19 % decrease compared with 2016. Both Italy and Spain reported fewer facilitators (and thus were mostly responsible for the decline in aggregate numbers).

Asylum applications

In 2017, according to EASO, 701 997 applications for international protection were lodged in the 28 EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland (EU+). The three main countries of origin of applicants in the EU+ were Syria (97 619 applications), Iraq (48 771), and Afghanistan (46 533). Syrians continuously represented between 13 % and 16 % of all applicants. Citizens from Iraq applied in higher numbers in the second half of the year.
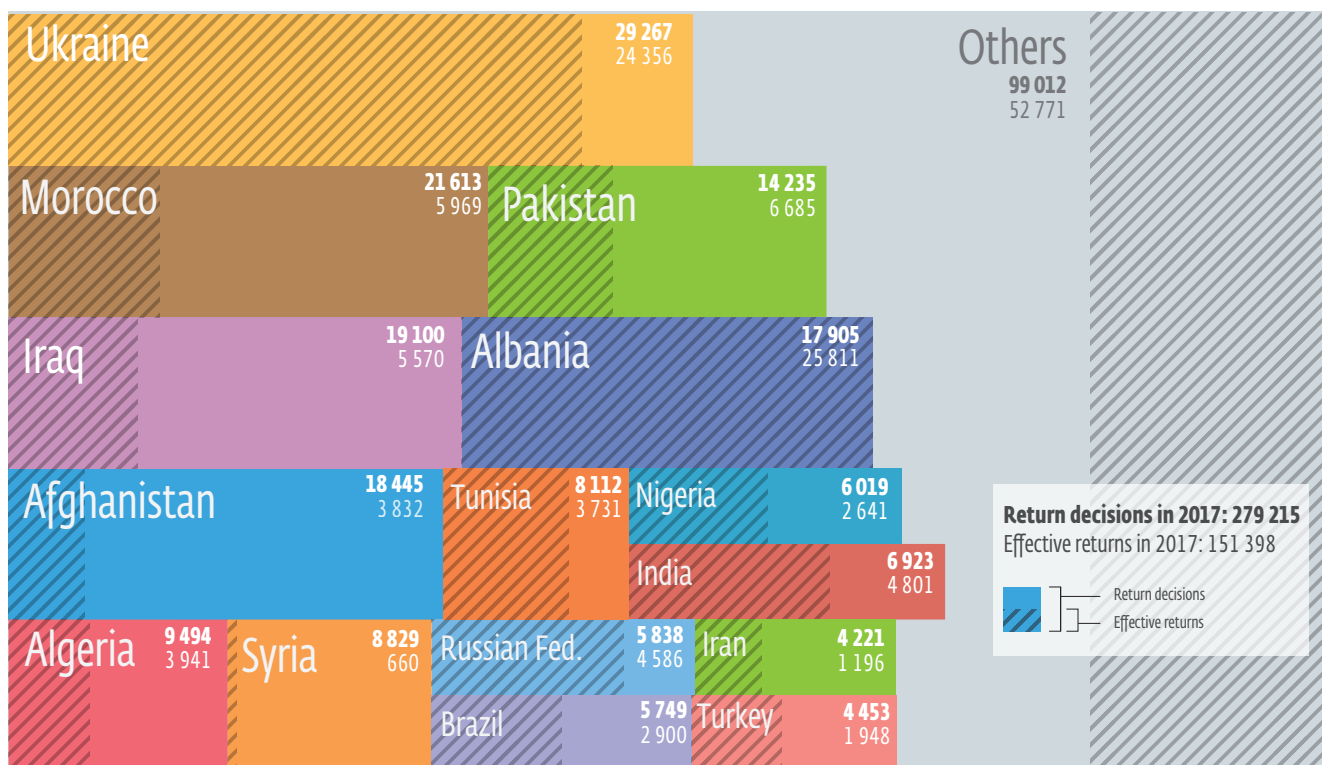
The relocation scheme ended in September 2017, but relocations of persons already registered for the process continued. According to EASO in 2017, 23 238 persons were relocated, half of whom were Syrian nationals, a third Eritreans, and one tenth Iraqi. Altogether, there were 33 168 persons relocated from both Italy and Greece since the launch of the mechanism.

The implementation of the EU-Turkey statement continued with 11 354 people resettled from Turkey to the EU+ under

the statement[1], while slower progress was noted in terms of returns to Turkey when the total number of returnees reached 2 082 persons by the end of 2017[2], with many cases being subsequently appealed.

Several policy-related developments took place at EU level in the course of 2017 as the implementation of the European Agenda on Migration continued, including activities related to the strengthening of the common asylum policy. At the end of 2017, negotiations were ongoing in the European Parliament and in the Council on the Commission's proposals tabled in May and July 2016 for the reform of the Dublin Regulation, the Qualifications and Asylum Procedures Regulations and the Reception Conditions Directive, as well as on the proposal concerning the transformation of the European Asylum Support Office into the European Union Agency for Asylum.

---

1 European Commission, Annex to the report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council. Progress report on the European Agenda on Migration. Resettlement, 15 November 2017.

2 European Commission, State of play EU-Turkey Statement. Returns from Greece to Turkey since 21 March 2016, 19 January 2018.

Ukraine	**29 267** 24 356		Others **99 012** 52 771	
Morocco **21 613** 5 969	Pakistan	**14 235** 6 685		
Iraq	**19 100** 5 570	Albania	**17 905** 25 811	
Afghanistan	**18 445** 3 832	Tunisia	**8 112** 3 731	Nigeria **6 019** 2 641
				India **6 923** 4 801
Algeria **9 494** 3 941	Syria	**8 829** 660	Russian Fed. **5 838** 4 586	Iran **4 221** 1 196
			Brazil **5 749** 2 900	Turkey **4 453** 1 948

Return decisions in 2017: 279 215
Effective returns in 2017: 151 398

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).

5.7. Returns

In 2017, Member States reported 279 215 return decisions issued to third-country nationals, which represented an 8.6 % decrease compared with 2016. The absolute total number of migrants subject to return decisions is still underestimated by this indicator, as data on decisions were unavailable from Austria, France and the Netherlands. As in previous years, the number of return decisions was much larger than the total number of effective returns to third countries (151 398). The main reasons for non-return are related to practical problems in the identification of returnees and in obtaining necessary documentation from third-country authorities. In addition, many decisions to return voluntarily do not materialise as the persons decide to stay illegally.

Some Member States reported that, over time, several return decisions have been issued to the same individuals. Although it is not possible to quantify the phenomenon, as data at EU level are anonymised, it illustrates the difficulty to

effectively implement a return decision. Other Member States report figures on effective returns that exceed the number of return decisions. This is primarily because some authorities are not fully reporting these decisions.

Finally, return decisions may also concern voluntary returns that are not registered. In fact, for voluntary return, only a few Member States apply a policy of controlled departure. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to ascertain that a return decision has effectively been implemented.

Within the number of effective returns to third countries, 50 % were reported to be on a voluntary basis and 50 % were forced returns. In terms of nationalities, there is a striking difference between the nationalities detected crossing the border illegally or staying illegally in the EU, and those effectively returned. Indeed, many detections of illegal border-crossing or even detections of illegal stay concern migrants who will apply for asylum and thus are not returned

before a possible negative asylum decision is issued.

The Commission noted in its communication on return policy that data on basic parameters (such as the average length of detention, grounds for detention, number of failed returns, and use of entry bans) proved to be only available from a limited number of Member States. Moreover, common definitions and approaches concerning data collection are frequently absent, impacting on the comparability of such data across the EU.

In 2017, the Agency assisted Member States in returning more than 14 000 people whose asylum applications were rejected and who did not receive subsidiary protection status or were no longer eligible to remain in the EU. This was about a third more than the previous year and accounted for 9 % of the 151 398 effective returns conducted by Member States. In addition, the Agency increased the number of Member States to which return specialists were deployed.

FRONTEX
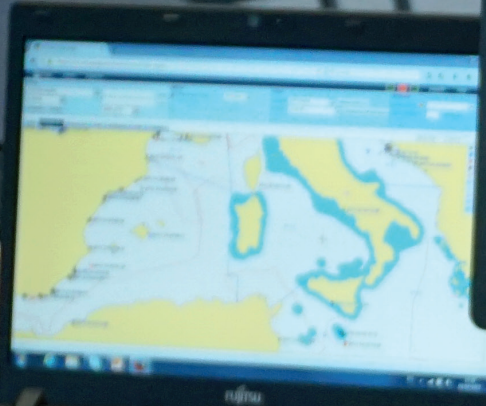EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY

ONGOING MISSION

PAST MISSIONS

SCHEDULED MISSIONS

CREATE ARTICLE

LOGOUT

FRONTEX
EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GU

6. Featured analyses

6.1. Secondary movements in the EU

In 2017, many indicators of secondary irregular migration seemed to be in significant decline after the migration crisis. In fact, the concerted effort of the countries along the Western Balkan route to control their borders and to end the facilitated crossing of their territories resulted in reducing the visible flow of people on the most frequently used secondary route through the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Hungary and further on to Austria and Germany.

The effect of the migration crisis of 2015–2016 on secondary movements

However, detections reported from Member States showed that these movements continued after March 2016 and throughout 2017, although at lower levels and in a more covert way. In fact, the reinstatement of controls at the internal borders of some Member States led to a diversification in routes and *modi operandi*. The detections of persons without valid documents reportedly travelling between EU/Schengen countries decreased by around only 15 % between 2016 and 2017. However, the number of asylum applications of some of the most often detected nationalities using these routes remained on a comparably high level.

South-Eastern route: ongoing flows

In 2017, the level of intra-Schengen migration coming via the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes was much lower than in 2016 – even though secondary routes became more diverse.

Asylum data from those Member States reached by migrants after having crossed the Western Balkan countries, however, point to a continuing secondary flow through the region. Taking as an example Afghan, Iraqi and Pakistani nationals, who primarily enter the EU from Turkey, significant discrepancies can be found in the data: while in 2017, around 13 800 nationals of these three countries were detected crossing the Eastern Mediterranean illegally, and only around 8 700 the Western Balkan route, Member States reported to Eurostat around 78 000 asylum applications submitted by these three nationalities (from a total of around 117 000 applications and after excluding 39 175 multiple asylum applications derived from Member States reporting on Eurodac hits).

Southern route: joint controls at a key location

In November 2017, the Austrian government announced the start of checks for migrants hiding on freight trains near the Brenner Pass as part of the inception of trilateral controls between Austria, Germany and Italy. The reason for these measures was the repeated cases of irregular migrants risking their lives travelling on cargo trains with the intention to reach Germany. The controls started on the Italian side of the Brenner Pass.

The number of detections of illegal stay of West African undocumented nationals, who mostly entered the EU through the Central Mediterranean, remained on a similar level as in 2016, although reported illegal border-crossings by West African nationals decreased by around one-third compared with 2016.

Substantial secondary flows from Italy to France

The number of irregular migrants detected by France, who were identified to have previously applied for asylum or had been detected for illegal border-crossing to Italy, substantially increased between 2016 and 2017, similar to the number of African nationals detected staying illegally in France. Apart from those African migrants applying for asylum in France, many irregular migrants transited France with the intention to reach the United Kingdom.

EU-wide collection and harmonisation of information on secondary routes key to more targeted checks

Open sources and data reported by Member States point to significant hidden irregular migratory flows into and within the European Union / Schengen area. Targeted controls conducted on the basis of joint data collection and analysis would help to prevent migrants, especially those who travel hiding in lorries and trains, from using the dangerous and long secondary routes.

6.2. Returns, is the system effective?

The Malta Summit of 3 February 2017 highlighted the need for a review of EU return policy in order to ensure the effective implementation of a sustainable migration policy throughout the EU. The renewed Action Plan on Return sets out steps at each stage of the return process to tackle key challenges for return – both at EU level and in the cooperation with countries of origin and transit. In March 2017, the Commission put forward a concrete set of practical recommendations to Member States with a view to making return procedures more effective and improving cooperation with countries of origin on return and readmission, in line with fundamental rights requirements.

Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, continues to support Member States in returning third-country nationals who have been issued negative asylum decisions or who have no right to stay. In particular, the Agency coordinates and organises return operations and return interventions to reinforce the return systems of Member States. In 2017, the Agency supported 341

return operations by charter flights, returning 14 189 persons. Compared with 2016, this was an increase of 47 % in the number of operations and an increase of 32 % in the number of persons returned. Moreover, risk analysis by the Agency has been extended to include periodic return analysis.

As regards the cooperation with third countries, the focus is on improving structured practical cooperation. Having concluded an agreement on Standard Operating Procedures on return with Bangladesh in September, the EU is now establishing structured practical cooperation with other key countries under this new approach.

Level of effective returns decreases to the lowest level since 2011

In 2017, the level of irregular migration significantly decreased, mirrored by the drop in the number of illegal border-crossings (204 719) in comparison with the previous year. Concurrently, Mem-

ber States reported only 151 398 effective returns to third countries, 14 % less than in 2016, and the lowest figure since 2012.

When comparing these two indicators, it should be taken into consideration that a substantial share of those who crossed the border illegally have the right to be granted international protection and are not subjected to return. On the other hand, many returnees have entered the EU abusing legal means, not by illegally crossing the external borders. Finally, examining irregular migration and returns, especially for a short reference period, does not take into account the period of time that usually lies between, on the one hand, arriving on EU territory, irregularly or by abusing legal means, and, on the other hand, the issuing of return decision and implementing the effective return.

Comparison between return decisions and effective returns reveals level of Member State capacities and international cooperation

The number of return decisions issued to third-country nationals dropped to 279 215, which constitutes a drop of 9 % compared with the year before. In fact, a comparison between return decisions and effective returns uncovers clear differences between the regions of origin. As regards Eastern European and Central American nationals, the number of effective returns amounts to 74–84 % of the reported return decisions issued.

At the other end of the spectrum are the countries of Central and Eastern Africa, where the number of effective returns only represents around 15 % of the return decisions, followed by Western and Northern Africa with 24–34 %.

Figure 5. **Comparison between return decisions and effective returns***
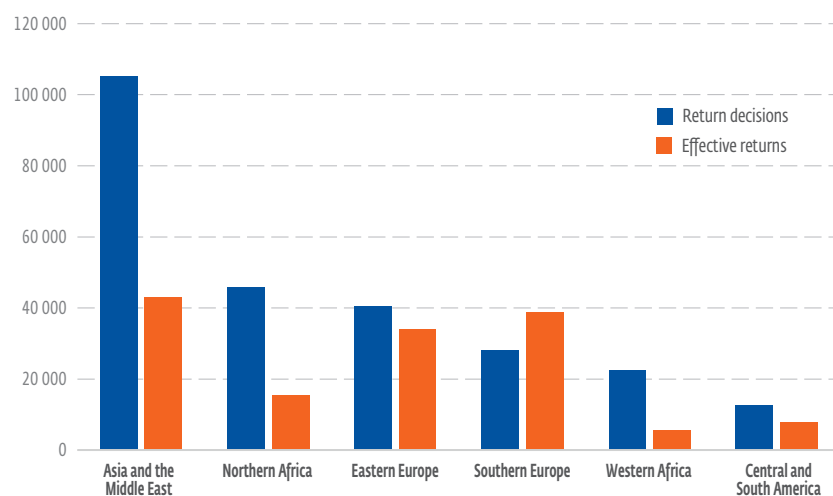
* For Southern Europe, the number of effective returns is larger than the number of return decisions due to differences in reporting practices among Member States

6.3. The role of border guards in countering terrorism

Evolving threats and challenges

Terrorism is a threat that transcends borders, a global challenge that requires concerted effort. Initially, the main conflict zones acted as areas of convergence. However, given the situation on the ground in a number of conflict zones – more specifically Daesh's territorial losses in Iraq, Syria and Libya – the threat became more decentralised. It is therefore assessed that the challenges of detecting terrorist movements are diverse and in all travel directions – on exit/entry and in-transit.

While al-Qaeda focused on the 'far enemy' and 'near enemy' strategy, Daesh Caliphate doctrine was to 'remain and expand'. The concept of expansion moved from endorsing the pledges of allegiance from regional provinces, known as wilayat, to the creation of areas of action.

Whether nourished by home-based extremism, by failed jihadists prevented from reaching a conflict area or mujahid returnees, the threat of inspired or directed terrorist attacks is likely to rise.

Travelling terrorists

In October 2017, the Soufan Center[1] assessed that of the over 40 000 foreigners that joined Daesh from more than 110 countries, around 5 600 from 33 different countries had returned home.

In July 2017, the Radicalisation Awareness Network estimated that about 30 % of over 5 000 Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) who resided in Europe, and left to Syria, Iraq or Libya, came back to the continent.

The focus should not just be on FTFs but also their support structures. The challenges are even more complicated when adding the hundreds of brides and children, in many cases widows and or-

[1] A nonprofit organisation focusing on research and analysis on a broad range of security issues.

phans. Data on FTFs are neither exhaustive nor standardised. The infographics in Figures 6 and 7, offers a contextual understanding of the magnitude of the threat from Daesh's global ranks and highlights the challenges that border guards and police authorities face in countering terrorism.

Women and minors

Islamist radicalisation is no longer a male dominated phenomenon. Under Daesh, women have taken on prominent roles, particularly in scouting for and encouraging other women to travel to the main areas of operations. Over the past years, the number of women leaving Europe on their own initiative in order to join the conflict zone and/or Daesh has increased. Almost 1 000 women from Eu-

rope have joined the different jihadist groups in the Middle East, mainly Daesh. Furthermore, several hundred minors are also believed to have been brought to, or born in, the same region. It is particularly difficult to assess the threat posed by women and children, who in many cases are now *de facto* widows and orphans, since their involvement in violent activities in Syria or Iraq often remains elusive. However, many women have expressed the desire to take more active roles within Daesh. The plot to attack the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, planned by several females in September 2016, illustrates this trend.

Regular / irregular movements

Formal border-crossing points offer authorities a structured environment for

Figure 6. **Top five countries of origin of Foreign Terrorist Fighters who joined the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq**
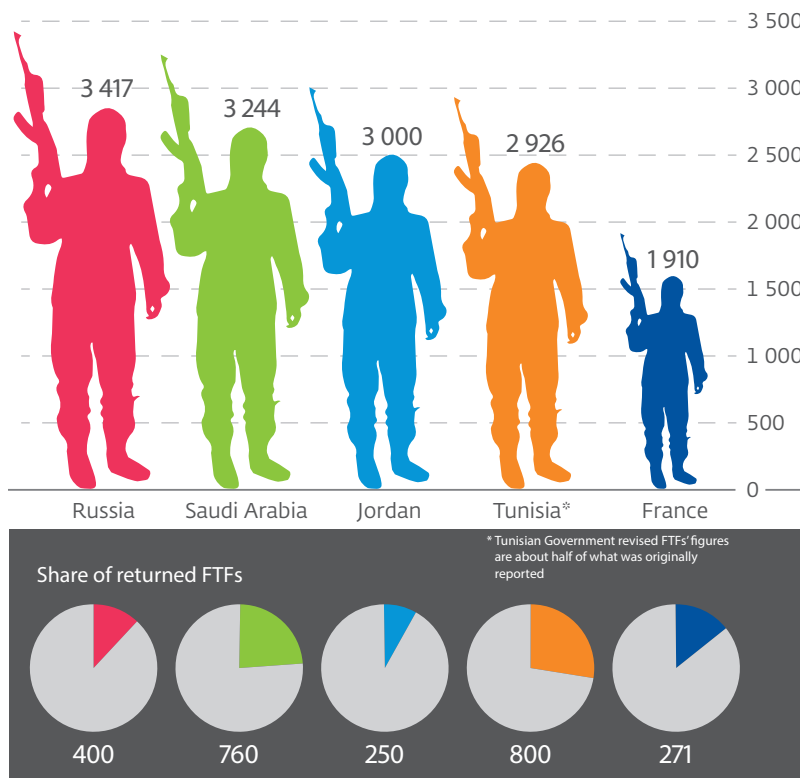
	Russia	Saudi Arabia	Jordan	Tunisia*	France
Number of FTFs	3 417	3 244	3 000	2 926	1 910
Share of returned FTFs	400	760	250	800	271

* Tunisian Government revised FTFs' figures are about half of what was originally reported

Source: the Soufan Center

the potential identification of travelling terrorists or persons of interest. However, the green and blue borders pose many additional challenges, particularly during large and sustained irregular migration movements.

While stressing that many migrants detected for illegal border-crossing are persons who are eligible for international protection, there are many challenges at the EU's external borders in detecting those linked to terrorism, crimes, or those suspected of war crimes.

Strengthening counter-terrorism efforts

Borders provide challenges but also offer opportunities in better countering terrorism. The external border dimension is a geographical filter where Member States can take actions, enforce the rule of law and pursue prosecutorial or judicial actions. To this end, a number of legislative changes were made with the aim of deterring, disrupting, detecting and detaining terrorist related movements.

The European Border and Coast Guard Regulation underlines Frontex's role in counter-terrorism. It states that due to its activities at the external borders, the Agency should contribute to the prevention and detection of serious crimes with a cross-border dimension, including terrorism.
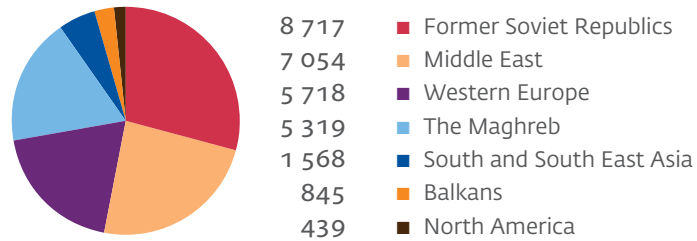
Moreover, Article 8(1) states that the Agency shall, within the respective mandates of the agencies concerned, cooperate with Europol and Eurojust and provide support to Member States in circumstances requiring increased technical and operational assistance at the external borders in the fight against organised cross-border crime and terror-

Figure 7. **Foreign Terrorist Fighters by regions**

8 717	■ Former Soviet Republics
7 054	■ Middle East
5 718	■ Western Europe
5 319	■ The Maghreb
1 568	■ South and South East Asia
845	■ Balkans
439	■ North America

Source: the Soufan Center

ism. Furthermore, Article 40(8), states that Member States shall authorise and provide members of the European Border and Coast Guard teams with access to national and European databases which may be consulted.

The amended mandate further expands the Agency's supporting role to Member States' counter-terrorism efforts, which is already being done through screening, registration, document checks or voluntary debriefing activities. All these activities converge on the main goal of supporting Member States in identifying potential travelling terrorists or persons of interest through detailed security checks.

Frontex is regularly providing data from its debriefing interviews to Europol. The information packages with personal data transmitted to Europol are mainly in relation to migrant smuggling, but could possibly include information on terrorists.

Security checks

Checks at the external borders remain one of the main safeguards of the Schengen area and significantly contribute to guaranteeing the long-term security of the Union and its citizens. Such

checks are carried out in the interest of all Member States. One of the purposes of these checks is to prevent any threat to the internal security of the Member States, irrespective of the origin of such threat – including potential threats posed by EU citizens.

The 2017 amendment of the Schengen Borders Code reinforcing checks means that all persons crossing the European Union's external borders, both European Union citizens and third-country nationals, are now systematically checked against databases. Successful crosschecks in the Schengen Information System rely on Member States populating the database with relevant and actionable information. Furthermore, the global nature of the threat from terrorism necessitates carrying out security checks also against non-European data banks including, when appropriate, Interpol's databases.

On 8 June 2017, the Council of the European Union adopted conclusions recommending security checks in case of irregular migration. The Council recalled that terrorists could exploit irregular migratory movements to enter into the European Union and highlighted the importance of setting up best practices in terms of security checks, also using biometric data, of irregular migrants.

6.4. The impact of maritime cross-border crime to Europe

The Agency's regulation, as amended in 2016, expanded the scope of risk assessment – as an essential component of European Integrated Border Management (IBM) – to encompass the analysis of cross-border crimes. Cross-border crime is defined as 'any serious crime with a cross-border dimension committed at or along, or which is related to, the external borders'. This brief overview delineates the main challenges associated with cross-border crime from a border surveillance perspective.

The Mediterranean Sea: drug trafficking cross-roads

It is estimated that approximately 125 tonnes of cocaine worth EUR 27 billion are consumed in Europe each year. Large cocaine shipments are smuggled directly from Latin America to Europe through transatlantic routes within shipping containers and concealed compartments of various types of vessels. In recent years, cocaine smuggling networks have been diversifying the routes using transhipment hubs in West Africa (e.g. Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, The Gambia, Senegal, and Nigeria) and the Caribbean. Cocaine is moved by various transportation modes across North African countries to Europe.

About 80 tonnes of Afghan heroin are smuggled to Western and Central Europe each year through the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey and South-Eastern Europe. Recent developments include the emergence of two new routes via the Southern Caucasus, and Syria and Iraq. However, the 'Balkan route' remains a key corridor for heroin entry into the EU. Albanian and Kosovo*-based criminal groups, among other Balkan groups, play a key role in the smuggling of heroin to Europe. Heroin is also smuggled from Afghanistan through the so-called 'southern route' – a network of routes stretching from Afghanistan through Pakistan, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean – to East Africa and then to Europe since criminal groups try to use alternative transhipment routes to minimise the risk of being intercepted by law enforcement. Developments on this route suggest a more significant role in the supply of European markets.

Cannabis herb is produced in large quantities in South-Eastern Europe (especially Albania) and exported to Western and Central Europe via the Adriatic Sea on speed boats and ferries from Albanian ports or land routes through neighbouring Balkan countries. Cannabis resin of Moroccan origin is smuggled to Western and Northern European markets by Moroccan drug trafficking groups in cooperation with international organised crime groups. Spain is the main entry point to Europe and the principal smuggling method involves the use of speed boats. Significant quantities of Moroccan cannabis resin are also transported to North African countries, possibly for onward transportation to European markets. South-Eastern Europe also represents a secondary route for the smuggling of Moroccan cannabis resin to Europe.

Cigarette smuggling not only at the land borders

Cigarette smuggling has been an important source of revenue for international organised crime, but has also been linked to terrorist financing. According to OLAF, illicit tobacco seizures in Europe increased from 3.1 billion cigarettes in 2013 to 3.8 billion in 2015. Even though approximately half of all cigarette seizures occurred at eastern land borders, maritime-related smuggling activities and detections (i.e. in ports and sea areas) represent a significant share of the total, as cigarette smugglers routinely use all modes of transport. Their *modi operandi* include, among others, smuggling via shipping containers with cover load documentation and exploitation of the limited oversight and simplified procedures in free-trade zones (FTZ). Cigarettes, apart form being illicitly imported into Europe, are also produced by clandestine factories located within Europe, which raw tobacco from Europe and overseas as a way to lower transportation costs and interception risks. Being a sophisticated form of crime, illicit tobacco trade is facilitated by price differentials between EU Member States and neighbouring countries as well as corruption at EU borders.

Table 1. **Narcotics-related detections in Frontex-supported multipurpose operations**

	2016			Seized drugs					2017			Seized drugs				
	Number of detections	Smugglers	Kilograms	Cocaine	Hashish	Marijuana	Heroin	Other	Number of detections	Smugglers	Kilograms	Cocaine	Hashish	Marijuana	Heroin	Other
Indalo	66	61	69 793						72	12	87 133					
Triton	23	27	20 261						40	18	32 440					
Poseidon	7	10	2 791						47	0	13 240					
Hera	2	2	844						16	3	3 066					
Focal Points Sea	2	2	0						22		1 135					
Minerva	36	47	1 602						3	33	40					
Grand Total	**136**	**149**	**95 291**						**200**		**137 054**					

Maritime routes for firearms trafficking

The illicit trade in firearms enables diverse organised crime and terrorist activities. According to the findings of the European Commission funded Project FIRE, the majority of firearm seizures (i.e. pistols and rifles) in the period 2010-2015 occurred in Western Europe (35 %), Southern Europe (26 %), Northern Europe (21 %) and Eastern Europe (18 %). The main destination countries were France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Seizures mostly took place in the border areas (close to third countries with stockpiles), large ports and regions with strong presence of organised crime groups. After the Cold War, many firearms were brought into Europe from former Soviet and Yugoslavian States as well as the Balkans. However, conflict areas near the EU (e.g. Ukraine, the Middle East and Libya) may open up new trafficking routes, including maritime ones. According to UNODC, small and large-scale firearms trafficking seems to mirror other known illicit trafficking patterns (e.g. drugs, contraband) that occur along land, sea or air routes. The recent case of the vessel 'Andromeda', flying the flag of Tanzania, which was seized in Greece for carrying 29 containers with explosives, highlights both the scale of activities and the dangers arising from this crime area.

Frontex-supported multipurpose maritime operations

As can be seen in Table 1, in 2017 maritime-related detections of narcotics in joint operations increased by 44 % overall in comparison to the previous year. In the same period, the number of detections increased by 43 % and the number of arrested smugglers by 34 %. This significant increase was mainly due to numerous detections of cannabis herb (marijuana) and cannabis resin (hashish) across operational areas. As regards detections of other narcotics, two major seizures of cocaine were reported in 2016 and 2017. Heroin detections, however, were less significant.

Other detected crimes in Frontex-supported operations included cigarette smuggling, weapons smuggling and stolen vehicles. The illicit smuggling of cigarettes occurs quite frequently in the main operational areas. As shown in Table 2 below, millions of pieces of smuggled cigarettes were seized in the Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean in 2017 marking an overall increase of 637 % compared with 2016. This sharp increase was associated with a number of major seizures that significantly influenced detection statistics. During the same period, the number of incidents rose by 24 % and the number of arrested smugglers by 65 %.

Importantly, when comparing and interpreting the achieved results it should be borne in mind that the JOs Triton and Poseidon are year-long operations whilst the JOs Indalo, Hera and Minerva last

for a shorter period of time. Also, the reported detections – despite the multipurpose character of Frontex JOs – relate more to migrant smuggling (and search-and-rescue activities) because of the migratory pressures in the Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean.

Improved operational responses in the maritime domain

Organised crime groups flexibly exploit all maritime transportation modes to smuggle illicit commodities to European markets. The narcotics trade forms only a part of the whole picture of cross-border criminality, whose scope is broader including various illicit flows (e.g. counterfeit products, cigarettes and firearms), trafficking in human beings and terrorism.

Criminal activities with the use of various types of vessels thrive in poorly controlled maritime areas within and beyond national jurisdictions – for example, in the 200 nm exclusive economic zones (EEZ) and on the high seas. Frontex-supported surveillance and multipurpose operations cover specific areas of the Mediterranean Sea helping to achieve significant results. Even so, the identified cross-border crimes represent a fraction of the crimes that actually take place at the EU's external maritime borders.

The suppression of large-scale narcotics and other sophisticated trafficking activities depends on intelligence-led criminal investigations. However, the number of detections of serious crimes during multipurpose operations can be improved through better risk assessment and targeting. For this reason, Frontex will conduct thorough risk assessments and deepen its cooperation with all stakeholders to improve operational responses.

Table 2. **Other detections of smuggled goods in Frontex-supported multipurpose operations**

| Joint Operation | 2016 | | | | | | | 2017 | | | | | | |
| | Number of detections | Smugglers | Cigarettes (pieces) | Stolen vehicles | Stolen vehicle parts | Weapons | Ammunition | Number of detections | Smugglers | Cigarettes (pieces) | Stolen vehicles | Stolen vehicle parts | Weapons | Ammunition |
			Seized items							Seized items				
Indalo	4	4	323 452					7	12	64 330 000	4			
Poseidon	6	8	13 985 980					10	18	42 425 600		782		35 482
Triton	3	4	150 000			1		2	0	680 000			1	
Focal Points Sea	2	2	400			2		2	3	368				
Minerva	2	2	159 520							11 400				
Grand Total	**136**	**149**	**14 560 632**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**21**	**33**	**107 435 968**	**4**	**782**	**1**	**35 482**

6.5. Debriefing interviews highlight key patterns

Since 2016, Frontex has been collecting information from voluntary interviews (debriefings) with newly-arrived migrants in the Central, Eastern and Western Mediterranean Sea in the framework of the Pilot Project PeDRA (Processing Personal Data for Risk Analysis). In 2017 (until the end of November), 3 525 interviews with migrants from more than 70 countries were conducted upon their arrival in Italy, Greece and Spain by Frontex Guest Officers deployed from EU Member States. Of the total, 1 948 interviews were conducted in the Central Mediterranean, 991 in the Eastern Mediterranean and 586 in the Western Mediterranean.

6.5.1. Analysis of migratory patterns

- Almost half of all interviewed migrants stated economic push-pull factors for migration.
- The preferences of migrants from numerous source countries converged on a small number of highly attractive final destination countries in the EU.
- The significant number of migrants travelling with family via the Eastern Mediterranean poses particular challenges for the reception and asylum system of Greece.

The sheer number of different nationalities provides evidence of the diverse origins of irregular migrants that contribute to the phenomenon of mixed migration flows. The top five nationalities of the whole sample were Syrians, Moroccans, Iraqis, Algerians and Sudanese. The most commonly interviewed migrants belonged to the age group 18–35 years old (86 %) and were unmarried (65 %) males (89 %) from African, Middle East and Asian countries – together accounting for 60 % of interviews.

As regards the education of interviewed migrants, 13 % reported university, 42 % secondary and 29 % primary level education – with only 5 % illiterate. More than half had secondary and university level education – mainly migrants from Syria, Sudan, Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Morocco and Guinea.

More than half of all interviewed migrants travelled alone, with the remainder travelling as a group or with families. Some differences, however, were noticed per smuggling route. Migrants in the Central and Western Mediterranean tended to travel alone (51 %) significantly more than those travelling via the Eastern Mediterranean route (41 % alone and 17 % as a group). The interviewed migrants travelling with family represented 38 % in Eastern, 13 % in Central and only 4 % in Western Mediterranean. This finding carries important implications for the reception and accommodation of vulnerable groups (i.e. women, children and elderly people), especially in the overcrowded reception facilities on the Hotspot islands of Greece, as well as the need to accelerate the processing of their asylum requests.

In 2017,nearly all interviewed migrants claimed to have friends or relatives who are already in the EU, a trend similar to that observed in the previous year. This points to the role of already established diasporas in the EU that act as a pull factor for would-be migrants in source countries. In 2016, Italy was the most common final destination country, followed by Germany, France, Spain and the United Kingdom. In 2017, Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Greece and United Kingdom were at the top of the list. This successive trend suggests that migrant preferences are asymmetrically distributed as they cluster around a small number of highly attractive final destination countries. This represents a stable trend observed at least over the last two years.

Certain nationalities demonstrated patterned responses regarding their final destination countries. For example, many Eritreans showed a preference for the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy; Gambians for Italy and Germany; Moroccans for Spain, Italy and France; Nigerians for Italy; and, Syrians for Germany. The great variation of source countries and the clustering of migrant preferences towards a small number of prime destination countries shape the pattern of irregular migration towards the EU and the subsequent secondary movements.

Furthermore, out of the sample, among the push and pull factors, 45 % of the interviewed migrants mentioned economic reasons. The poor economic situation in their countries of origin together with the economic / work-related opportunities in destination countries were quoted as the principal reasons behind their decision to migrate to affluent European countries. For approximately 16 % of migrants, conflict in their home country together with the asylum policy in receiving countries were the second most important reasons for migration.

However, differences per migration route were found within the sample. Positively-aligned economic (push-pull) reasons were mentioned by 58 % of interviewed migrants in the Western Mediterranean, 45 % in the Central Mediterranean and only 15 % in the Eastern Mediterranean. Specifically, in the Eastern Mediterranean the pattern was largely reversed with 68 % of migrants citing push factors (i.e. conflict, extreme religious activity and national service) as the main reasons for leaving their countries. Since the interviewed migrants along this migratory route referred to a variety of pull factors (including economic ones), the push and pull factors were not aligned to a considerable degree revealing complex reasons behind their decision to migrate to Europe. Conversely, many of those travelling via the Eastern Mediterranean route are in mentioned the need of international protection.

6.5.2. Analysis of smuggling patterns

- Migratory movements through neighbouring third countries – especially, Turkey and Libya – to Europe depend to a large extent on the availability of smuggling services.
- The maritime specialisation of migrant smugglers requires particular attention by border police authorities.
- Both in terms of demand and supply, the facilitation business in Turkey and Libya has assumed a truly international character transforming these countries into major migration hubs.

Significantly, 88 % of all interviewed migrants reported that they had been facilitated to complete their irregular journeys. Most migrants in the Eastern Mediterranean (92 %) and in the Central Mediterranean (90 %) were facilitated, whereas the share of facilitated migrants in the Western Mediterranean stood fairly lower (75 %). Despite several push-pull factors that could influence the selection of smuggling route, facilitation was perceived as the most important variable by 69 % of interviewed migrants in the Eastern Mediterranean and 65 % in the Central Mediterranean. In the Western Mediterranean, however, facilitation was seen as the most important factor by only 38 % of migrants. This significant difference was due to the higher importance migrants assigned to the aspects of safety, price, border topography and low risk of detection. Overall, the fact that the majority of newly-arrived migrants through the main three migration corridors turned to the services of facilitators to enter the EU illegally proves the crucial role of smuggling markets and networks in driving irregular migration to Europe.

In addition, the analysis of migrant interviews highlighted the most important facilitator roles. Namely, the 'bosses', who run smuggling groups and control specific areas of operations, and their recruiters (or agents), who find migrants wishing to be smuggled across to Europe. The second most important roles were those of safe house managers (or owners) and middlemen (or brokers). Other distinct roles such as boat operators, drivers, document forgers, money collectors and security providers were mentioned by migrants to a lesser extent. Most likely, this suggests that the latter roles are instrumental but less important. So, based on migrants' answers, the people smuggling business is mainly organised by various 'bosses' and their recruiters. This finding could help focus police work on the key cooperation between 'bosses' and their agents with the aim of targeting them and eventually disrupting the business model of migrant smuggling.

The majority of interviewed migrants (85 %) travelled by boat to various arrival points in Spain, Italy and Greece. Since maritime transportation is the principal smuggling method, it implies that the ability to organise sea journeys is a key attribute of the smuggler profile. For this reason, increased focus on smugglers' maritime specialisation could assist intelligence and law enforcement efforts.

According to migrants' answers, people smugglers of 55 different nationalities were involved in the facilitation of irregular migration towards Libya, Turkey and Spain and onwards to the EU. Reportedly, the facilitators were active in 41 different countries, which suggests the international scope and reach of their activities. The top ranking nationalities of facilitators were Libyan, Syrian, Iraqi, Turkish and Afghan. Importantly, however, the vast majority of facilitators operated mainly in two countries – Turkey (37 %) and Libya (30 %). Other countries with significant presence of facilitators were: Iraq, Morocco, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Algeria and Egypt – together accounting for 30 % of the total. The concentration of diverse nationalities of facilitators in Turkey and Libya denotes the importance of these two countries as major regional hubs for irregular migration into Europe.

Further analysis of the relationship between smuggler and migrant nationality identified a significant non-matching pattern between Turkish and Libyan facilitators and the nationalities of migrants facilitated by them. In other words, Turkish (100 %) and Libyan (93 %) facilitators tended to smuggle different nationalities of migrants to Europe (as opposed to smuggling their compatriots). Turkish facilitators smuggled Syrian, Iraqi, Iranian, Afghan, Palestinian and Pakistani migrants. Libyan facilitators smuggled Moroccan, Syrian, Sudanese, Egyptian, Tunisian and Ethiopian migrants. To a smaller extent, other non-matching patterns involved Algerian, Egyptian, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Senegalese and Sudanese facilitators who smuggled different migrant nationalities more often than their fellow nationals.

Conversely, a significant matching pattern was noticed regarding Iraqi and Syrian facilitators. This means that Iraqi (88 %) and Syrian (62 %) facilitators tended to smuggle their fellow nationals a lot more than different nationalities of migrants. To a smaller extent, other facilitators who tended to smuggle their compatriots more often than other nationalities of migrants involved Afghan, Bangladeshi, Cameroonian (100 %), Congolese, Moroccan and Pakistani nationals. Besides smuggling their compatriots, Iraqi facilitators also smuggled Syrian and Iranian migrants, whereas Syrian facilitators smuggled Iraqi, Palestinian, Moroccan and Egyptian migrants.

6.6. Trafficking in human beings: vulnerabilities at the external borders

Trafficking in human beings (THB) is currently one of the most profitable forms of organised crime, generating billions of euros for traffickers. Europe, which comprises some of the wealthiest nations in the world, has long been an important market for the exploitation of victims, particularly through sexual exploitation, forced labour, exploitation of criminal activities, begging and illegal adoption. The high levels of supply in origin countries, coupled with the demand for cheap labour and sexual services in the destination countries, are among the most common root causes of human trafficking.

The secretive nature of THB and differences between Member States' victim identification procedures makes it difficult to gauge the full extent of this crime and arrive at precise figures regarding the total number of victims in the EU. However, data collection efforts at EU level has put the number of registered victims (both identified and presumed) at 15 846 for 2013 and 2014, a number believed to be significantly higher.

The present analysis aims to shed light on some of the main issues affecting the EU's external borders, which require special attention from border and coast guards: THB from Africa – particularly from Nigeria – and unaccompanied and separated children.

Trafficking in human beings from Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly countries in West Africa, currently represents one of the main source regions of victims of human trafficking in the EU. The victims are mainly from poverty-stricken areas where high levels of unemployment, deprivation, illiteracy and gender inequality prevail, factors that often boost their desire to travel abroad in search of new opportunities. They come in large numbers from Nigeria, but also from such countries as Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone.

Trafficking in human beings, from Nigeria in particular, has in the past few years become of particular concern to law enforcement authorities across the EU. Although human trafficking from Nigeria has, for decades, supplied the European sex market, the spike in the number of Nigerian females arriving in mixed migration flows to Italy (and, to a lesser extent, Spain), has brought the phenomenon of THB from Nigeria to light. Currently, Nigeria represents the top nationality of third-country victims of THB in the EU.

The Nigerian victims are mostly women and increasingly younger girls, many of whom are minors. The great majority originates from states in southern Nigeria, particularly Edo, Ogun, Osun, Lagos, Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Rivers, Cross-River, Delta and Akwa Ibom. The victims are recruited from poor communities where families struggle to survive economically. They are often approached by former prostitutes turned traffickers or people working on their behalf with offers of well-paid jobs or studies in European countries. The future, however, turns out to be much grimmer for the many women and girls who embark on the journey to Europe.

Before departing from Nigeria, the victims are often subjected to a humiliating and daunting voodoo ritual (named juju), during which their nail clippings, pubic hair or menstrual blood and items of clothing are taken and placed in a packet kept by the juju priest. The ritual aims to instil fear in the victims and ensure that they will pay their debt to the traffickers upon arrival in Europe and refrain from collaborating with authorities in the destination country or share information that could identify their traffickers. The fear of the juju, which victims believe may cause death to them or their families in case they break the oath, has become a very effective method of restraint and psychological control over victims, and an important tool to ensure compliance and payment of the debt.

From Nigeria, the victims travel overland to Libya or Morocco through the city of Agadez in Niger. Many are subjected

The greatest share of identified victims are trafficked into the EU for the purpose of sexual exploitation. According to UNODC, 67 % of the 12 775 victims detected in Western and Southern Europe between 2012 and 2014, whose form of exploitation was reported, were trafficked for this purpose. Likewise, in Central and South-Eastern Europe, more than two thirds of the 6 870 victims detected were subjected to sexual exploitation. However, the number of identified victims of THB for labour exploitation has also increased over the past few years, leading to some Member States recording a higher number of victims of THB for labour exploitation than any other type of exploitation.

Child trafficking has also gained significant prominence in the EU in the past few years, as the number of registered child victims increases. Indeed, in the period 2013–2014, around 15 % of the registered victims of THB were children.

Besides domestic, short-distance and medium-distance trafficking, the EU is affected by long-distance trafficking, with victims coming from countries in Africa, Asia and South America. Approximately 29 % of victims of human trafficking in the EU are believed to originate from Third Countries, with the biggest share of victims coming from the African continent.

to violence and exploitation on the way to Europe, as they are placed in connection houses where they are isolated from the external world, raped and forced into prostitution. Others still are sold to different traffickers during the journey, changing hands like a commodity. Once in Europe, the victims are usually placed in open reception centres where they are picked up by the traffickers soon after their arrival.

The great majority of the victims who make it across the Mediterranean end up working as prostitutes in the streets of Europe to pay their traffickers an excessively high debt – that can at times amount to up to EUR 50 000. After they pay off of their debt, some will turn into madams, recruiting new victims to support the criminal organisation that exploited them for years.

Separated and unaccompanied children

Globally, children comprise the second-most prevalent group of victims of human trafficking after women. Over the period of 2012–2014, child victims represented around 25 % to 30 % of the total number of victims of THB.[1] The EU in particular, has witnessed an increase in the number of registered cases of child trafficking in the past few years. Available statistics on this phenomenon indicate that in the period 2013–2014, of a total number of 15 846 victims registered in the EU, 2 375 were children.[2] The phenomenon of child trafficking has been exacerbated by the ongoing migration crisis. Of particular concern are third-country children who arrive in the EU within the migratory flow unaccompanied or separated from their family; their number has increased exponentially in recent years. Most of these children are fleeing war and conflict, poverty, natural disasters, forced marriage and conscription, and travel to the EU to seek refuge and a better life.

The Central Mediterranean and, prior to the EU-Turkey agreement on resettlement of refugees signed in March 2016, the Eastern Mediterranean routes have served as main entry points for unaccompanied and separated children looking to come to the EU. In early 2016, around 40 % of the total number of migrants arriving in Greece by sea were children (a figure that comprises both accompanied and unaccompanied children). In the Central Mediterranean this figure proved even higher, with 92 % of all children arriving in Italy by sea in 2016 and the first two months of 2017 believed to be unaccompanied.[3] Despite these estimations, the total number of children arriving unaccompanied in the EU is difficult to gauge.

Upon arrival in Europe, these children become the perfect target for unscrupulous traffickers, as their young age, inexperience, naivety and desire to start work or studies, makes them more vulnerable and easily manipulated, exposing them to a severe risk of THB and subsequent exploitation. Migration camps and reception centres set up in the EU to accommodate newly-arrived migrants may increase the vulnerability of already at-risk children, particularly where the centres lack adequate conditions (i.e. weak or non-existent protective structures) or the children share overcrowded facilities with adults not related or unknown to them. Traffickers are known to operate outside reception centres, picking up their victims upon arrival in Europe. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in the trafficking of Nigerian girls, who frequently claim to be older at arrival, so as to be placed in open reception centres alongside other migrants, from where it is easier to escape.

The alarming scale of human trafficking from African countries, particularly Nigeria, and the arrival of unaccompanied or separated children who may be at risk of THB, brings to light the vital role of border guards in the fight against human trafficking. Border guards may sometimes represent the only opportunity for victims to get support and protection from exploitation. It is therefore paramount that border guards are trained and properly equipped with the knowledge and resources that enable a swift and early identification of potential victims upon arrival, so as to ensure that the right referral and protection mechanisms are activated, adequate treatment and assistance provided and the risks of trafficking and future exploitation mitigated. Children and women represent some of the most vulnerable groups and their protection should be a top priority in Europe.

---

1 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2016). Global Report on Trafficking in persons, p.25

2 https://tinyurl.com/ec-home-affairs-May-2016.

3 UNICEF (2017) A Child is a Child

Frontex Headquarters in Warsaw, 2017
© Frontex

7. Outlook

Based on the description of the situation in 2017, this chapter reviews the possible evolution of the situation along the external borders of the EU in the coming years. While some developments are likely to materialise, others seem possible, based on current knowledge. Past experiences demonstrate that there are a large number of unforeseeable events and factors that can have a profound and unpredictable impact on the situation at the border.

The likely

Continued pressure in the southern area

Considering the remaining large pool of migrants stranded in Libya, in the immediate future (2018), developments in that area will be most decisive for the overall number of arrivals at the EU's external borders, assuming that the EU-Turkey statement holds.

On the Eastern Mediterranean route, the increased number of illegal border-crossings in the latter half of 2017 was a reflection of the overall number of attempts to cross the Eastern Aegean rather than a declining commitment to prevent departures by the Turkish authorities.

On the Western Balkan route, Serbia's visa liberalisation for Chinese, Indian and Iranian citizens, granted in September 2017, has started to show an impact. The numbers of migrants claiming to be citizens of these countries detected for illegal border-crossing and fraudulent use of documents at the EU's external borders are already rising.

The increase in the number of citizens of Mali and Côte d'Ivoire on the Western Mediterranean may be the precursor of an even larger pressure on the Western Mediterranean route.

Increased share of Africans

The share of African migrants, and in particular West African migrants, detected crossing the border illegally is likely to grow.

Increased passenger flows and responsibilities

Regular passenger flows across the external border will increase significantly due to rising global mobility. Border-control authorities will have to take on more responsibilities as a result of introducing visa liberalisation processes, local border traffic agreements and systematic checks of all passengers. Border management will increasingly be risk-based to ensure that interventions are focused on the movements of high-risk individuals, while low-risk movements are facilitated smoothly.

The air travel environment is becoming more complex with the growth of low-cost carriers. In addition, advances in travel complexity and increasing sophistication of criminal activities result in increasing workload for border-control officers.

Given the increasing level of security features in modern travel documents and stricter migration policies across Member States, the misuse of genuine travel documents (which includes impersonation

and fraudulently obtained documents) is likely to be an entry method that will become more widespread.

The possible

Increasing complexity

In the Mediterranean, the increasing complexity of irregular arrivals is expected to absorb significant resources. The vast surveillance area, along with the increasing trend in boats seeking assistance, results in border assets being increasingly mobilised in support of search and rescue activities.

In addition, as a consequence of increased surveillance, border – control authorities are often among the first authorities to detect a wide range of illegal activities. This implies developing synergies with other EU activities in the maritime domain in general, such as other actors present at sea or the EU Delegations (through development programmes but also with their counter-terrorism experts).

Increasing arrivals of vulnerable people (women, children, persons fleeing conflicts)

Increasingly, border-control authorities need to be prepared to manage the flow of vulnerable people, including numerous children. This makes it necessary to focus on further development of specific mechanisms and procedures to meet the needs of this vulnerable group at the EU's external borders, including all air, land and sea borders.

Change in *modus operandi*, including non-detection

Swift diversification of *modi operandi*, displacement between routes or border types, and attempts to evade detection or identification are all possible to occur in response to enhanced surveillance and migration control. While until recently,

migrants detected at the border could swiftly continue unhindered to their final destinations, the emerging pattern is that migrants who go undetected can arrive at their destination quickly; it also means that they do not have to bear the consequences of being detected for illegal stay or being refused asylum. The number proportion of migrants undertaking secondary movements is also expected to rise.

Transit through Turkey and the Western Balkans

In addition, an increasing number of migrants from North Africa and the Middle East are expected to transit to Turkey via the air border, before attempting to cross illegally the border to the EU, also by using forged documents. Istanbul Atatürk Airport is an important hub for irregular migrants travelling by air to several Member States.

The Western Balkans geographical location makes it an important transit area for irregular migrants en route from Turkey towards Western Europe. In addition, Serbia now offers visa-free travel options to new third countries that makes it more attractive for migrants to reach the EU.

Underlying threat of terrorism

Overall, there is an underlying threat of terrorism-related movements. Conflict zones like Syria, Iraq and Libya have attracted thousands of foreign terrorist fighters, including EU citizens, dual-nationality holders and other third-country nationals. Given the loss of ground Islamist extremists suffered in a number of conflict zones, the threat has evolved into a more decentralised reality that increases the risk of terrorists' movements.

The risk that terrorists cross the border illegally remains. Moreover, document fraud – including the misuse of fraudulently obtained documents and/or genuine documents used by impostors – is to be increasingly expected.

The unknown

Unforeseen events can play a big role in shaping migration flows. It is safe to assume that unpredictable developments will, again, influence the situation at the external borders.

Political developments, the level of cooperation with third countries, changes in Libya are hard to predict. What is visible, however, is that a great number of people are being displaced. According to UNHCR, in 2016, 65.6 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide. Most of them are from and stay in developing countries, and only a fraction decide to move to the EU. Yet, this small number may have sizeable impact on the EU's borders and their management. The size and composition of the flows are inherent to the appearance and development of crises, hence the importance of obtaining information from a wide range of countries and sources, developing capabilities to monitor the flows and understanding their drivers.

Threats at the borders may also take non-conventional forms, some physical such as terrorism, others are more subtle, like misinformation campaign and media manipulation to undermine core European values. Emerging powers can use migration to instrumentalise migration flows, or use the complexity of migratory movements as a pretext for concessions. These 'hybrid threats' combine the interconnected nature of challenges (terrorism, migration), with the multiplicity of actors involved (regular forces, criminal groups) and the diversity of means (diplomatic, technological). As such they are particularly difficult to anticipate and require comprehensive approaches aimed at managing the risks they pose.

The launch of European Border and Coast Guard Agency
© Frontex, 2016

8. Conclusions

The rise in detections on the Western Mediterranean stands out against the overall decrease in detections of illegal border-crossing and suggests that **the actual pressure exerted on the external borders stays high**. Geopolitical and economic drivers of migration are on the rise and the EU remains exposed to large migration flows.

Irregular migration by sea, and more specifically via the Mediterranean routes, will remain the main *modus operandi* for illegally crossing the EU's external borders and also one of the most dangerous forms of migrant smuggling and one which often requires humanitarian assistance efforts. To tackle this phenomenon, cooperation among maritime security players and shared use of assets are gaining momentum. **Border control authorities are increasingly confronted with the detection of cross-border crimes** such as drug trafficking and the smuggling of excise goods, but also pollution and fisheries issues. While the synergies created offer opportunities, they also require adapting and scaling up of border control resources.

In 2017, great strides were made in achieving the goal of uniform registration of irregular migrants crossing the EU's external borders due to the continued implementation of the Hotspot concept.

The alarming scale of human trafficking from African countries, particularly Nigeria, and the arrival of unaccompanied or separated children who may be at risk of THB, bring to light the vital role of border and coast guards in the identification of potential victims of human trafficking. **Border guards may sometimes represent the only opportunity for victims to receive support and protection from exploitation.**

There are signs that migrants rapidly exchange information about travelling routes and crossing borders to circumvent migration control. Migrants are becoming more autonomous, sustaining themselves while on the move and passing information back to other migrants, as well as relying on local criminal structures for crossing borders.

In turn, **document fraud, apart from being an essential element of criminal activities such as trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling, has also been increasingly associated with terrorist threat**. The introduction of sophisticated security features in travel documents has pushed users of fraudulent documents to develop new techniques and target other types of documents used to support applications for genuine travel documents, making it more difficult to detect fraud.

Border-control authorities put the majority of their efforts into conducting entry and exit checks. This obligation increased significantly in 2017 with the demand to carry out systematic checks against relevant databases on all persons, including EU citizens. While this has significantly impacted the work of border guards, so have the ever-increasing passenger flows, which continue to be driven by visa liberalisation and local border traffic agreements as well as ever-increasing passenger numbers. These are most visible at the air borders as a result of increased mobility and the rapid expansion of the supply of more affordable flight options.

Relations with the border control authorities of third countries focusing on border security issues most relevant to them is matter requiring attention. In building relations with third countries, consideration should be given to the EU's political priorities and the core values on which the EU is based in a rapidly changing security environment, both internally and externally.

Effective returns are increasing at a slower pace than return decisions, a trend that reveals the difficulty Member States experience in enforcing returns. The extent of return cooperation, the effectiveness of readmission agreements and Member States capacities in returns are likely to continue having substantial impact on the size and routes of irregular migration flows.

9. Statistical annex

Annex Table 1. **Detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs**

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

Routes	2014	2015	2016	2017	Share of 2017 total	% change on previous year
Central Mediterranean Route	**170 664**	**153 946**	**181 376**	**118 962**	**58**	**-34**
Nigeria	8 233	21 914	37 554	18 163	15	-52
Guinea	1 360	2 716	13 550	9 714	8.2	-28
Côte d'Ivoire	1 493	3 756	12 399	9 509	8	-23
All Other	159 578	125 560	117 873	81 576	69	-31
Eastern Mediterranean Route	**50 834**	**885 386**	**182 277**	**42 305**	**21**	**-77**
Sea	**44 057**	**873 179**	**174 605**	**34 732**	**82**	**-80**
Syria	27 025	489 011	81 570	13 957	40	-83
Iraq	382	90 130	26 573	6 417	18	-76
Afghanistan	11 582	212 286	41 775	3 713	11	-91
All Other	5 068	81 752	24 687	10 645	31	-57
Land	**6 777**	**12 207**	**7 672**	**7 573**	**18**	**-1.3**
Syria	4 648	7 329	3 015	2 438	32	-19
Turkey	81	69	190	2 217	29	1 067
Pakistan	186	319	893	901	12	0.9
All Other	1 862	4 490	3 574	2 017	27	-44
Western Mediterranean Route	**7 243**	**7 004**	**9 990**	**23 143**	**11**	**132**
Sea	**4 749**	**5 740**	**8 641**	**21 632**	**93**	**150**
Morocco	468	631	722	4 809	22	566
Algeria	734	1 059	1 693	4 213	19	149
Côte d'Ivoire	224	510	1 547	3 201	15	107
All Other	3 323	3 540	4 679	9 409	43	101
Land	**2 494**	**1 264**	**1 349**	**1 511**	**6.5**	**12**
Guinea	319	496	604	636	42	5.3
Cameroon	624	168	298	391	26	31
Côte d'Ivoire	114	99	99	144	9.5	45
All Other	1 437	501	348	340	23	-2.3
Western Balkan Route	**43 357**	**764 038**	**130 261**	**12 178**	**5.9**	**-91**
Pakistan	368	17 057	5 583	4 355	36	-22
Afghanistan	8 342	53 237	10 620	3 388	28	-68
Iraq	421	7 425	2 607	960	7.9	-63
All Other	34 226	686 319	111 451	3 475	29	-97
Circular Route from Albania to Greece	**8 841**	**8 932**	**5 121**	**6 396**	**3.1**	**25**
Albania	8 757	8 874	4 996	6 220	97	24
Turkey	.	1	1	18	0.3	1 700
Syria	.	.	25	18	0.3	-28
All Other	84	57	99	140	2.2	41
Eastern Borders Route	**1 275**	**1 927**	**1 349**	**776**	**0.4**	**-42**
Vietnam	257	461	399	261	34	-35
Ukraine	126	102	138	105	14	-24
Russia	131	100	119	69	8.9	-42
All Other	761	1 264	693	341	44	-51
Black Sea Route	**433**	**68**	**1**	**537**	**0.3**	**53 600**
Iraq	90	12	.	495	92	n.a.
Iran	45	9	.	35	6.5	n.a.
Pakistan	15	.	.	3	0.6	n.a.
All Other	283	47	1	4	0.7	300
Western African Route	**276**	**874**	**671**	**421**	**0.2**	**-37**
Senegal	26	19	1	189	45	18 800
Morocco	52	42	94	109	26	16
Not specified	.	.	67	51	12	-24
All Other	198	813	509	72	17	-86
Other	**10**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**
Total	**282 933**	**1 822 177**	**511 047**	**204 719**	**100**	**100**

Annex Table 2. **Illegal border-crossing between BCPs**

Detections reported by purpose of illegal border-crossing, minors and border type at the external borders

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Share of total	% change on prev. year	Highest share
Purpose Of Illegal Border-Crossing							**Nationality**
Irregular migration	229 606	1 606 519	500 215	181 022	88	-64	Syria (11 %)
Not available	53 073	215 536	10 663	23 564	12	121	Morocco (21 %)
Smuggling of goods	105	57	104	85	0	-18	Ukraine (73 %)
Other	149	65	65	48	0	-26	Russia (44 %)
Minors							**Nationality**
No	:	:	:	138 890	68	n.a.	Nigeria (12 %)
Yes	:	:	:	40 320	20	n.a.	Syria (18 %)
Not available	:	:	:	25 509	12	n.a.	Pakistan (17 %)
Border Type							**Nationality**
Sea	220 188	1033 814	365 295	176 291	86	-52	Nigeria (10 %)
Land	62 745	788 363	145 752	28 428	14	-80	Albania (23 %)
Total	**282 933**	**1822 177**	**511 047**	**204 719**	**100**	**- 60**	

* 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 3. **Illegal border-crossing between BCPs**

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

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Share of total	% change on prev. year
All Borders						
Syria	78 887	594 059	88 551	19 447	9.5	-78
Nigeria	8 706	23 605	37 811	18 309	8.9	-52
Côte d'Ivoire	2 000	5 010	14 300	12 913	6.3	-9.7
Guinea	2 156	5 174	15 985	12 801	6.3	-20
Morocco	3 085	12 966	6 836	11 387	5.6	67
Iraq	2 109	101 275	32 068	10 168	5.0	-68
Pakistan	4 115	43 310	17 973	10 015	4.9	-44
Bangladesh	4 527	13 098	9 445	9 384	4.6	-0.6
Gambia	8 725	8 874	12 927	8 353	4.1	-35
Mali	10 567	6 526	10 270	7 688	3.8	-25
All Other	158 056	1008 280	264 881	84 254	41	-68
Total All Borders	**282 933**	**1822 177**	**511 047**	**204 719**	**100**	**-60**
Land Border						
Albania	9 268	9 450	5 316	6 502	23	22
Pakistan	555	17 444	6 519	5 281	19	-19
Afghanistan	9 445	55 077	12 171	3 684	13	-70
Syria	12 189	97 551	5 777	3 122	11	-46
Turkey	361	494	921	2 645	9.3	187
Iraq	938	10 135	4 041	1 769	6.2	-56
Kosovo*	22 069	23 792	927	862	3.0	-7.0
Guinea	346	605	622	640	2.3	2.9
Cameroon	727	810	364	494	1.7	36
Iran	262	1 548	997	395	1.4	-60
All Other	6 585	571 457	108 097	3 034	11	-97
Total Land Borders	**62 745**	**788 363**	**145 752**	**28 428**	**100**	**-80**
Sea Border						
Nigeria	8 490	22 666	37 759	18 262	10	-52
Syria	66 698	496 508	82 774	16 325	9.3	-80
Côte d'Ivoire	1 794	4 635	14 189	12 759	7.2	-10
Guinea	1 810	4 569	15 363	12 161	6.9	-21
Morocco	3 042	12 723	6 012	11 298	6.4	88
Bangladesh	4 219	8 685	8 952	9 124	5.2	1.9
Iraq	1 171	91 140	28 027	8 399	4.8	-70
Gambia	8 642	8 699	12 854	8 220	4.7	-36
Mali	9 789	6 189	10 226	7 680	4.4	-25
Eritrea	34 323	39 774	21 284	7 272	4.1	-66
All Other	80 210	338 226	127 855	64 791	37	-49
Total Sea Borders	**220 188**	**1033 814**	**365 295**	**176 291**	**100**	**-52**

* 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 4. Clandestine entries at BCPs

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

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Border Type						
Land	2 972	3 288	1 896	1 204	74	-36
Sea	80	913	323	414	26	28
Top Ten Nationalities						
Afghanistan	1 022	967	233	489	30	110
Guinea	66	66	360	246	15	-32
Iraq	85	317	221	171	11	-23
Syria	1 091	1 731	667	113	7.0	-83
Algeria	120	73	127	80	4.9	-37
Albania	13	719	69	75	4.6	8.7
Turkey	32	24	35	49	3.0	40
Morocco	16	26	148	48	3.0	-68
Tunisia	14	64	63	47	2.9	-25
Pakistan	63	90	55	47	2.9	-15
All Other	530	124	241	253	16	5.0
Total	**3 052**	**4 201**	**2 219**	**1 618**	**100**	**-27**

Annex Table 5. Facilitators

Detections reported by place of detection and top ten nationalities

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Place of Detection						
Inland	6 967	4 669	5 199	4 397	43	-15
Land	1 214	1 413	1 954	3 150	31	61
Land Intra EU	811	872	879	1 033	10	18
Sea	585	1 137	962	1 032	10	7.3
Not specified	318	3 655	3 382	307	3.0	-91
Air	339	277	245	294	2.9	20
Top Ten Nationalities						
Morocco	959	1 138	1 233	804	7.9	-35
Not specified	653	702	1 970	791	7.7	-60
Albania	413	611	687	651	6.4	-5.2
Italy	487	370	504	477	4.7	-5.4
Spain	510	613	638	475	4.7	-26
France	417	469	490	434	4.2	-11
Romania	275	413	336	431	4.2	28
Pakistan	263	349	367	370	3.6	0.8
Syria	398	533	318	367	3.6	15
Turkey	396	411	236	279	2.7	18
All Other	5 463	6 414	5 842	5 134	50	-12
Total	**10 234**	**12 023**	**12 621**	**10 213**	**100**	**-19**

Annex Table 6. **Illegal stay**

Detections reported by place of detection and top ten nationalities

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Place of Detection						
Inland	366 467	632 453	409 889	352 507	81	-14
Air	33 793	41 179	50 347	46 387	11	-7.9
Land	15 511	18 527	23 486	29 980	6.9	28
Land Intra-EU	3 929	5 763	5 938	5 232	1.2	-12
Sea	901	681	578	1 680	0.4	191
Not specified	2 372	51		0	n.a.	n.a.
Between BCPs*	2 160	720	1 680	:	n.a.	n.a.
Top Ten Nationalities						
Ukraine	15 786	22 652	28 996	32 599	7.5	12
Morocco	28 416	29 731	30 042	29 857	6.9	-0.6
Albania	21 248	28 926	24 127	24 800	5.7	2.8
Iraq	5 802	61 462	31 883	21 705	5	-32
Afghanistan	22 365	95 784	50 746	21 492	4.9	-58
Algeria	14 778	14 948	17 274	19 886	4.6	15
Pakistan	12 804	23 179	19 573	19 840	4.6	1.4
Tunisia	14 765	12 919	11 382	15 912	3.7	40
Nigeria	7 661	12 386	14 838	14 995	3.4	1.1
Eritrea	32 477	39 338	24 655	13 010	3.0	-47
All Other	249 031	358 049	238 402	221 690	51	-7.0
Total	**425 133**	**699 374**	**491 918**	**435 786**	**100**	**-11**

Annex Table 7. **Refusals of entry**

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

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Border Type						
Land	64 512	86 945	162 302	126 502	69	-22
Air	46 451	47 023	46 663	49 378	27	5.8
Sea	4 899	5 311	6 438	7 668	4.2	19
Top Ten Nationalities						
Ukraine	17 312	21 763	27 766	37 117	20	34
Russia	10 825	16 732	80 215	36 342	20	-55
Albania	13 008	15 030	19 414	32 071	17	65
Serbia	8 659	6 971	6 822	7 718	4.2	13
Belarus	5 428	6 196	5 976	7 665	4.2	28
Moldova	1 229	3 060	3 799	5 953	3.2	57
Turkey	3 051	3 515	3 215	4 546	2.5	41
Morocco	4 439	4 348	4 637	3 918	2.1	-16
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4 007	3 785	4 082	3 775	2.1	-7.5
Brazil	2 315	2 652	3 701	3 143	1.7	-15
All Other	45 589	55 227	55 776	41 300	23	-26
Total	**115 862**	**139 279**	**215 403**	**183 548**	**100**	**-15**

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

Reasons for refusals of entry reported by top ten nationalities at the external borders

	Total Refusals	Reasons for refusals of entry (see description below)										Total Reasons
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	n.a.	
Top Ten Nationalities												
Ukraine	37 117	78	116	7 944	12	16 546	2 203	4 370	2 267	134	3 666	37 336
Russia	36 342	57	16	32 103	26	1 472	331	831	219	1 177	239	36 471
Albania	32 071	177	149	365	47	10 802	1 945	9 331	8 363	234	658	32 071
Serbia	7 718	103	59	385	7	978	3 405	780	1 986	33	34	7 770
Belarus	7 665	64	5	2 298	3	1 046	419	1 830	217	942	905	7 729
Moldova	5 953	12	13	578	1	2 443	456	1 961	459	22	71	6 016
Turkey	4 546	405	73	2 027	37	587	1 147	169	106	25	47	4 623
Morocco	3 918	224	74	594	91	1 960	145	282	340	252	52	4 014
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3 775	612	6	116	4	1 262	241	866	635	20	18	3 780
Brazil	3 143	16	12	625	0	1 196	107	169	275	31	754	3 185
All Other	41 300	2 900	1 002	10 039	637	13 271	1 784	3 422	2 615	528	6 460	42 658
Total	**183 548**	**4 681**	**1 548**	**57 215**	**879**	**52 140**	**12 265**	**24 138**	**17 655**	**3 423**	**12 822**	**186 766**

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. Document fraudsters – external borders

Persons detected using fraudulent documents at BCPs on entry to EU or Schengen area by border type and top ten nationality claimed

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Border Type						
Air	6 505	5 329	4 366	4 324	64	-1
Land	2 484	2 671	2 325	1 841	27	-21
Sea	409	359	351	535	8	52
Not specified	1	4	0	25	0	n.a.
Top Ten Nationalities						
Morocco	767	867	752	803	12	7
Ukraine	518	1 186	1 208	801	12	-34
Not specified	733	1 010	710	529	8	-25
Iran	263	340	375	438	7	17
Albania	570	424	386	346	5	-10
Russia	48	51	143	278	4	94
Turkey	294	114	210	275	4	31
Syria	1 448	745	234	208	3	-11
Iraq	338	243	273	159	2	-42
Senegal	232	137	111	124	2	12
All Other	4 188	3 246	2 640	2 764	41	5
Total	**9 399**	**8 363**	**7 042**	**6 725**	**100**	**-5**

Annex Table 10. Fraudulent documents

Detections of fraudulent documents on entry from third countries to EU or Schengen area by country of issuance and type of documents

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Share of total	% change on prev. year	Highest share
Country of Issuance							**Type of Document**
France	1 163	906	784	1 006	12	28	Passports (30 %)
Italy	1 149	931	872	935	11	7.2	ID cards (34 %)
Spain	1 021	973	839	903	11	7.6	ID cards (39 %)
Poland	488	1 011	892	739	9.0	-17	Visas (86 %)
Germany	396	476	467	494	6.0	5.8	Visas (35 %)
Greece	917	472	280	308	3.8	10	Passports (28 %)
Lithuania	49	96	428	285	3.5	-33	Visas (73 %)
Belgium	382	477	291	236	2.9	-19	Residence Permits (34 %)
Romania	90	110	129	186	2.3	44	ID cards (81 %)
Sweden	298	162	132	127	1.5	-3.8	Passports (38 %)
All Other	4 795	4 064	3 151	2 975	36	-5.6	Passports (68 %)
Type of Document							**Type of Fraud**
Passports	4 948	4 063	2 768	2 866	35	3.5	Authentic-Impostor (32 %)
Visas	1 616	1 934	2 115	1 833	22	-13	Authentic-Fraudulently obtained (54 %)
ID cards	1 398	1 203	1 176	1 378	17	17	False-Counterfeit (41 %)
Residence permits	1 506	1 383	1 167	1 179	14	1.0	False-Counterfeit (36 %)
Stamps	1 047	903	833	700	8.5	-16	False-Counterfeit (84 %)
Other	233	192	206	238	2.9	16	False-Counterfeit (70 %)
Total	**10 748**	**9 678**	**8 265**	**8 194**	**100**	**-0.9**	

Annex Table 11. **Return decisions issued**

Return decisions issued by top ten nationalities

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Top Ten Nationalities						
Ukraine	11 026	17 709	24 651	29 267	10	19
Morocco	19 843	22 360	22 437	21 613	7.7	-3.7
Iraq	3 292	16 093	28 454	19 100	6.8	-33
Afghanistan	11 861	18 655	34 440	18 445	6.6	-46
Albania	21 287	26 453	18 195	17 905	6.4	-1.6
Pakistan	13 717	12 777	16 091	14 235	5.1	-12
Algeria	7 790	6 832	9 490	9 494	3.4	0.0
Syria	26 489	27 937	9 830	8 829	3.2	-10
Tunisia	5 300	4 596	4 674	8 112	2.9	74
India	8 860	8 287	8 359	6 923	2.5	-17
All Other	122 521	125 026	128 842	125 292	45	-2.8
Total	**251 986**	**286 725**	**305 463**	**279 215**	**100**	**-8.6**

Note: Data for Belgium are not available for December 2017.

Annex Table 12. **Effective returns**

People effectively returned to third countries by top ten nationalities

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Top Ten Nationalities						
Albania	26 442	30 468	27 232	25 811	17	-5.2
Ukraine	9 582	14 995	21 006	24 356	16	16
Pakistan	9 609	8 089	6 373	6 685	4.4	4.9
Morocco	8 595	8 158	8 686	5 969	3.9	-31
Iraq	1 932	4 829	11 885	5 570	3.7	-53
India	7 609	9 419	8 402	4 801	3.2	-43
Russia	6 652	4 591	3 691	4 586	3.0	24
Serbia	6 243	7 482	6 843	4 533	3.0	-34
Kosovo*	4 743	10 144	7 681	4 055	2.7	-47
Algeria	3 691	3 202	3 439	3 941	2.6	15
All Other	76 204	73 796	70 139	61 091	40	-13
Total	**161 302**	**175 173**	**175 377**	**151 398**	**100**	**-14**

* 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.
Note: Since October 2015 data for Austria are not available.

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

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

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Type of Return						
Forced return	**69 399**	**72 839**	**78 750**	**75 115**	**50**	**-4.6**
Enforced by Member State	50 417	54 408	58 161	60 246	80	3.6
Not available	17 014	15 878	15 297	11 512	15	-25
Enforced by Joint Operation	1 968	2 553	5 292	3 357	4.5	-37
Voluntary return	**63 890**	**82 032**	**92 094**	**75 957**	**50**	**-18**
Others	37 483	54 464	61 569	53 783	71	-13
IOM Assisted	11 324	14 391	21 160	18 114	24	-14
Not available	15 083	13 177	9 365	4 060	5.3	-57
Not specified	**28 013**	**20 302**	**4 533**	**326**	**0.2**	**-93**
Total	**161 302**	**175 173**	**175 377**	**151 398**	**100**	**-14**
Top Ten Nationalities						
Forced						
Albania	6 306	10 258	19 513	21 741	29	11
Morocco	7 158	7 017	6 903	4 837	6.4	-30
Tunisia	3 048	2 268	2 730	3 465	4.6	27
Serbia	3 164	4 051	4 313	3 184	4.2	-26
Kosovo*	2 707	4 743	4 974	2 787	3.7	-44
Algeria	2 811	2 246	2 437	2 440	3.2	0.1
Ukraine	1 345	1 860	2 070	2 434	3.2	18
Pakistan	2 942	2 067	1 807	2 136	2.8	18
Nigeria	2 488	2 315	1 547	1 658	2.2	7.2
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	689	1 084	1 676	1 602	2.1	-4.4
All Other	36 741	34 930	30 780	28 831	38	-6.3
Total Forced Returns	**69 399**	**72 839**	**78 750**	**75 115**	**50**	**-4.6**
Voluntary						
Ukraine	8 122	13 054	18 914	21 919	29	16
Iraq	1 094	3 648	10 630	4 716	6.2	-56
Pakistan	3 507	4 479	4 268	4 549	6.0	6.6
Albania	2 013	4 647	5 526	4 002	5.3	-28
India	5 111	7 400	6 888	3 345	4.4	-51
Russia	5 018	3 644	2 724	3 066	4.0	13
Afghanistan	738	694	4 069	2 558	3.4	-37
Moldova	511	616	1 300	2 079	2.7	60
Georgia	849	740	1 214	1 994	2.6	64
Algeria	671	897	815	1 501	2.0	84
All Other	36 256	42 213	35 746	26 228	35	-27
Total Voluntary Returns	**63 890**	**82 032**	**92 094**	**75 957**	**50**	**-18**

* 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 14. **Passenger flow on entry**

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

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Border Type						
Air	114 379 454	128 607 844	163 802 970	176 736 561	58	7.9
Land	88 074 244	90 575 281	110 337 008	112 468 517	37	1.9
Sea	17 183 825	16 209 398	19 282 232	17 698 986	5.8	-8.2
Top Ten Nationalities						
Not specified	153 693 200	151 316 379	194 035 738	191 674 962	62	-1.2
EU MS/SAC	33 607 176	47 769 506	56 650 320	60 112 533	20	6.1
Ukraine	10 528 534	12 519 715	14 695 622	14 318 281	4.7	-2.6
Morocco	2 346	11 608	954 557	11 204 962	3.7	n.a.
Russia	10 437 116	9 182 409	9 661 081	9 746 876	3.2	0.9
Belarus	4 973 193	4 601 330	5 110 926	5 519 614	**1.8**	**8.0**
Serbia	2 471 762	2 755 058	3 521 431	3 462 083	**1.1**	**-1.7**
Moldova	1 037 811	1 391 367	1 680 342	1 920 623	**0.6**	**14**
Turkey	315 916	1 377 152	1 550 767	1 603 683	**0.5**	**3.4**
Andorra	57	129	136 997	1 506 419	**0.5**	**n.a.**
All Other	2 570 412	4 467 870	5 424 429	5 834 028	**1.9**	**7.6**
Total	**219 637 523**	**235 392 523**	**293 422 210**	**306 904 064**	**100**	**4.6**

Notes:
Data are not yet available for Italy for December 2017
Greece started to provide data since April 2016.
Data are available for Malta from August 2016.
Data are not yet available for Cyprus for July, August, October-December 2017.
Data are available for Cyprus from July 2016.
Data are not yet available for Portugal from June 2016.
Starting with December 2016, data from Spain are broken-down by nationality of the person.

Notes on FRAN data sources and methods

For the data concerning detections at the external borders, some of the border types are not applicable to all FRAN Member States. This pertains to data concerning 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 United Kingdom. For Cyprus, the land border refers to the Green Line demarcation with the area not under the effective control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For sea borders, the definitions are not applicable for land-locked countries 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. Data for Norway only includes detections of illegal border-crossing at land and sea BCPs (1B), not between BCPs (1A).

Data on detections of illegal border-crossing between sea BCPs (1A) are not available for Ireland. Data concerning the apprehension (FRAN Indicator 2) of facilitators is not available for Ireland. 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 concerning detections on exit are not available for Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom.

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

The data on return decisions issued (FRAN Indicator 7A) are not available for France, the Netherlands and Austria. The data on effective returns (FRAN Indicator 7B) are not available for Austria since 2016. In addition, the data of effective returns are not disaggregated by return operation (voluntary and forced) for Spain. The data on voluntary effective returns (FRAN Indicator 7A) are not disaggregated by type of return operation (IOM-assisted and others) for Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland and the Netherlands. The data on forced effective returns (FRAN Indicator 7B) are not disaggregated by type of return operation (enforced by Member States and by Joint Operations) for Belgium, Finland, Iceland and the Netherlands.

The data on passenger flow are not available for Austria, Ireland, Sweden, the UK and Portugal (since June 2016). 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.