

# Western Balkans Quarterly

QUARTER 2 • APRIL-JUNE 2015

Q1

Q2

Q3

Q4







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

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## List of abbreviations used

<b>BCP</b>	border-crossing point
<b>CIA</b>	Central Investigation Agency
<b>EDF-RAN</b>	European Union Document-Fraud Risk Analysis Network
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FRAN</b>	Frontex Risk Analysis Network
<b>Frontex</b>	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
<b>FYR Macedonia</b>	former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
<b>HRW</b>	Human Rights Watch
<b>ICJ</b>	International Court of Justice
<b>ID</b>	identification document
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>ISAF</b>	International Security Assistance Force – Afghanistan
<b>n.a.</b>	not available
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organisation
<b>PoR</b>	Proof of Registration
<b>Q/Qtr</b>	quarter of the year
<b>RAU</b>	Frontex Risk Analysis Unit
<b>RSHC</b>	Russian-Serbian Humanitarian Centre
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNSCR</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution
<b>WB-RAN</b>	Western Balkans Risk Analysis Network
<b>WB-ARA</b>	Western Balkans Annual Risk Analysis

# Introduction

## Concept

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

## Methodology

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

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

## Structure

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





# **I. SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW**

## I. SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW

Figure 1. General map of the Western Balkans region



# Summary of WB-RAN indicators

Table 1. Overview of indicators as reported by WB-RAN members

	Q2 2014	Q1 2015	Q2 2015	% change on same quarter last year	% change on previous quarter
<b>WB-RAN Indicator</b>					
Illegal border-crossing between BCPs	7 442	44 013	56 804	663	29
Illegal border-crossing at BCPs	310	394	2 241	623	469
Facilitators	193	517	572	196	11
Illegal stay	2 815	2 209	2 483	-12	12
Refusals of entry	10 197	8 469	9 827	-3.6	16
Asylum applications*	8 204	42 840	43 433	429	1.4
False travel-document users	186	245	241	30	-1.6

\* Applications for asylum for EU Member States include all applications received in the territory of the countries, not limited to those made at the Western Balkan borders.

Source: WB-RAN data as of 12 August 2015

## Key findings

- Record pressure exerted by non-regional transiting migrants, Syrians being the most detected nationality, closely followed by Afghans. Increased presence of African migrants
- Various countermeasures introduced by several countries in response to the high migratory pressure in the Western Balkans
- Low pressure exerted by the regional migration flow (migrants originating from the Western Balkans)

## Situation at the border

### Border surveillance

#### Illegal border-crossings

During the analysed period, roughly 52 200 **non-regional migrants** (citizens of countries other than Western Balkan countries) in transit from Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria were detected for illegal border-crossing at the common and regional borders (Fig. 2). This represents a 219% increase compared to the previous quarter. Nine out of ten illegal border-crossings in the Western Balkans were due to **non-regional migrants**.

Syrians and Afghans were by far the two main nationalities with 38% and 36% shares

of the non-regional flow, respectively. Overall, at regional level, in the analysed quarter detections of Syrian migrants increased significantly (+260%) compared to the previous three months, and Syrians ranked just ahead of Afghans, whose numbers rose by 193%.

The third and fourth positions were occupied by Iraqi and Pakistani migrants, both of whom accelerated their rising trends described in the past periods, registering three- and fourfold increases, respectively, compared to the previous quarter.

Together, these top four nationalities accounted for over 87% of the non-regional migration flow reported between BCPs.

Interestingly, during the period under review the number of detections involving **African migrants** rose more than three times compared to the previous quarter. All regions of Africa contributed to this overall increase, with Congolese, Somalis, Cameroonians and Nigerians being the top reported nationalities.

The detections of **Western Balkan regional migrants** (citizens of Western Balkan countries) decreased by 83% compared to the previous quarter, mainly in connection to the considerable decline of Kosovo\* nationals (-98%), and only accounted for 8% of the total illegal border-crossings (by regional and non-regional migrants) reported during Q2.

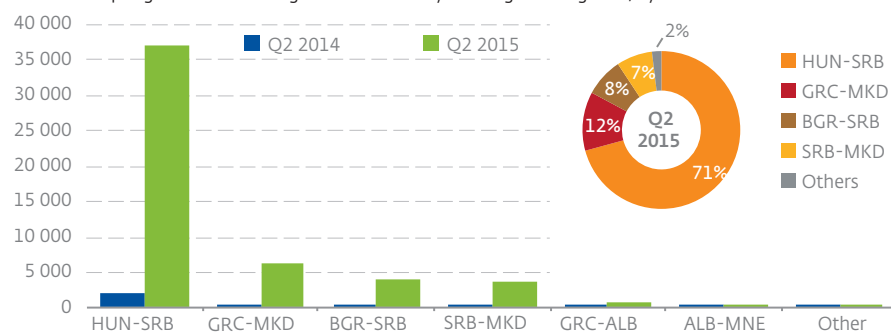
The drop in the numbers of Kosovo\* nationals can be regarded as a positive outcome of the concerted international action undertaken by Kosovo\*, Serbia, Hungary, Austria and Germany, which was more extensively discussed in the WB-ARA 2015.

More precisely, during the analysed quarter 4 583 illegal border-crossings of regional migrants were detected, which represents a sixth of the number in the previous three-month period. However, if compared with the same quarter of 2014 this figure is still 14% higher, mainly due to a rise in detections of Albanian nationals, who now account for 81% of the regional flow.

A vast majority (96%) of the nationals from Western Balkan countries detected while attempting an illegal border-crossing were reported at the common borders with EU Member States, especially on entry to Greece (75%) and Hungary (18%).

Figure 2. **The non-regional flow continues to enter the Western Balkans through the southern common borders and then exit in its northern part (mainly across the Hungarian-Serbian border)**

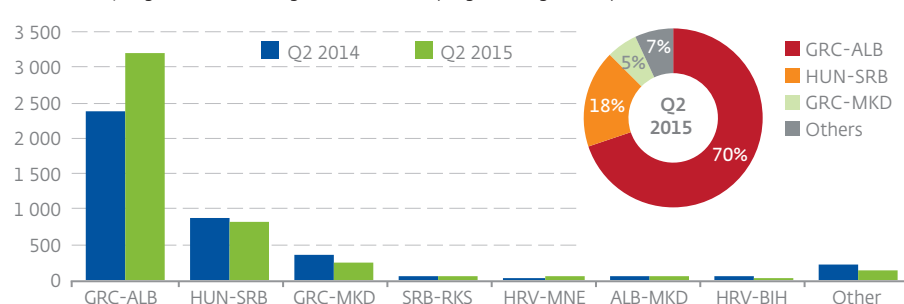
Detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs by non-regional migrants, by border section



Source: WB-RAN data as of 4 August 2015

Figure 3. **Detections of the regional flow tend to concentrate at the southern common borders (Albanian circular migration to Greece) following a decrease at the Hungarian-Serbian border**

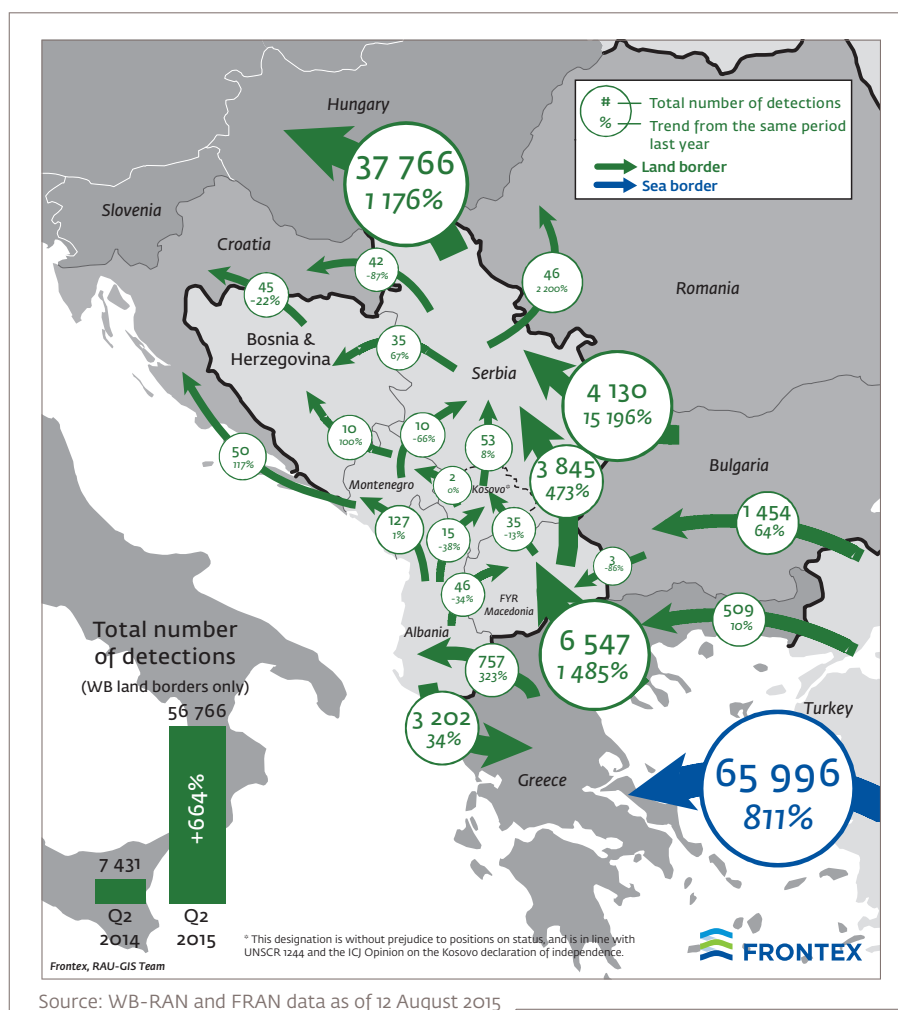
Detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs by regional migrants, by border section



Source: WB-RAN data as of 4 August 2015

Figure 4. **The Hungarian-Serbian border continued to be the busiest in terms of illegal border-crossing**

Changes in detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs between Q2 2014 and Q2 2015 at particular border sections and directions of the main flows



Source: WB-RAN and FRAN data as of 12 August 2015

## Facilitators

During the second quarter of 2015, 572 facilitators were detected, representing an 11% increase compared to the previous three-month period. This increase can be regarded as marginal if compared to the 226% rise in the number of reported illegal border-crossings by non-regional migrants. This indicates migrants' significantly improved ability to self-organise their trips.

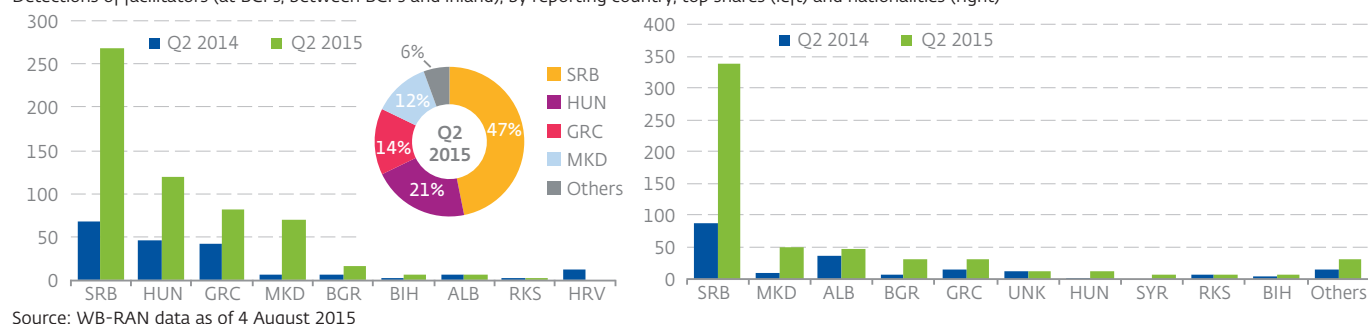
As regards nationalities, 79% of all facilitators detected in the analysed quarter were nationals of Western Balkan countries while 14% were citizens of the neighbouring EU Member States/Schengen Associated Countries.

Serbia continued to report the highest share of detected facilitators (47%) mainly at its borders with Hungary and the former

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, but also inland. This, along with the fact that over 59% of the facilitators reported at regional level were Serbian nationals indicates that Serbia remains the region's country most affected by the non-regional flow (as the lack of orientation in the region makes the non-regional migrants more likely to need facilitation).

Figure 5. **Serbia continued to report the highest number of facilitators in Q2 2015**

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



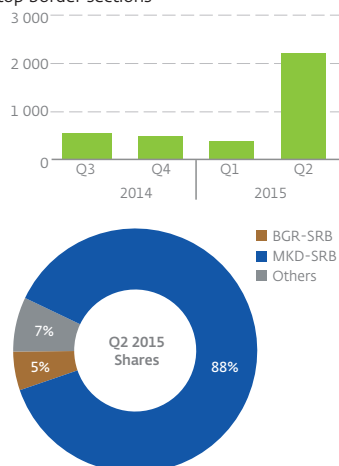
# Border checks

## Clandestine entries

In Q2 2015, a total of 2 216 non-regional migrants were detected while attempting to illegally cross the border hidden in vehicles (a sixfold rise compared to the previous quarter and the highest number since data collection began). Such a high increase was mainly due to the surge in detections at the border between Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This section accounted for 88% of the non-regional migrants detected at BCPs during Q2. In terms of nationalities,

Figure 6. **High increase of illegal border-crossings at BCPs is mainly linked to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia-Serbian border**

Evolution of detected illegal border-crossings at BCPs and top border sections



Source: WB-RAN data as of 12 August 2015

as at the green border, Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis were the decisive top three, together accounting for 92% of detections. Additionally only, 25 nationals of Western Balkan countries were reported at BCPs.

## Document fraud

During the second quarter, there were 241 cases of false document use reported by the six Western Balkan countries, a number similar to that of the previous quarter.

Serbia continued to rank first, with 45% of all regional detections, followed by Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, with 20% and 14% shares, respectively.

As regards nationalities, during the second quarter Albanians continued to rank first amongst false document users, followed by Serbian and Kosovo\* citizens.

The most commonly used false documents were passports, border stamps and ID cards. As in previous quarters the large majority of the detected ID cards (41 out of 50) were EU Member States' documents, as they can be used to move freely inside the Schengen area and the EU.

As far as detections of false passports are concerned, the majority (71) were reportedly issued by countries from the region. Most of these passports were Albanian (48), largely used by Albanian na-

tionals (47), most likely in an attempt to avoid entry bans following the abuse of visa liberalisation.

## Refusals of entry

In the analysed period, the number of refusals of entry increased by 16% compared to the previous quarter: from roughly 8 500 to 9 800. Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2014, the numbers remained relatively stable.

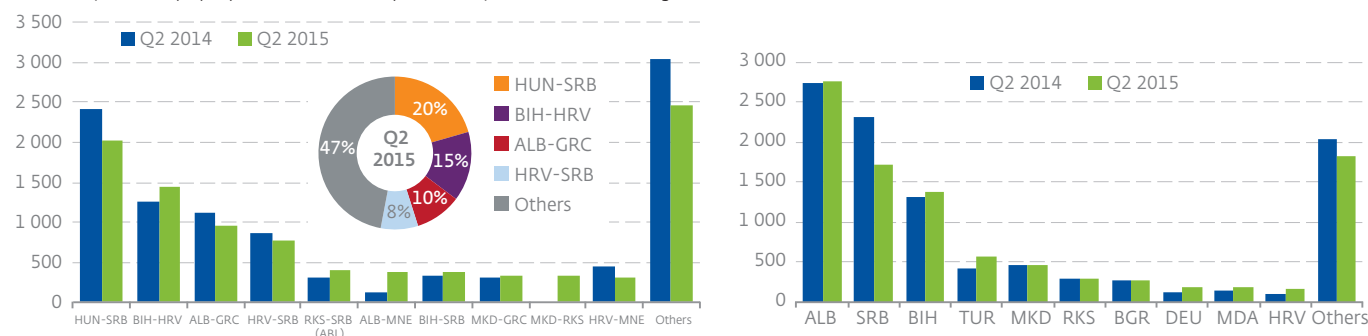
As usual, a large majority of refusals of entry were issued at the land borders (92%) while the remaining 8% were mostly reported at the air borders.

Most of the refusals reported by the neighbouring EU Member States were issued to nationals of Western Balkan countries (93%) while just under a half of the persons refused in the six regional countries were local residents, followed by EU nationals (mostly travellers unaware of the entry conditions required by Western Balkan countries), who accounted for 27%.

The overall number of refusals issued to migrants of those non-regional nationalities that typically enter the EU through Turkey/Greece still represented a very low share of the total. This indicates that the non-regional migrants transiting the Western Balkans tend to target the green borders without even attempting legal entry.

Figure 7. **Only a small proportion of refusals were issued to migrants transiting via Turkey/Greece (indicating that the non-regional flow predominantly targets the green borders)**

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



Source: WB-RAN data as of 4 August 2015

# Situation in the Western Balkans

## Illegal stay within the Western Balkan countries

There were 888 detections of illegal stay reported by the six Western Balkan countries during the analysed period, which represents a second consecutive quarterly decrease of this indicator. The number is significantly lower in relation to the previous quarter (-31%) and even more so when compared to the corresponding period of 2014 (-41%).

Looking at the top three nationalities in the analysed quarter, Serbians and Albanians

outpaced Syrians and ranked first and second, respectively, among detected illegal stayers. Serbians continued to be mainly reported by Bosnia and Herzegovina while Albanians seemed to prefer to stay illegally in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia in almost equal shares. Syrian illegal stayers ranked third in terms of detections during the second quarter and continued to be almost exclusively reported by Albania inside its territory.

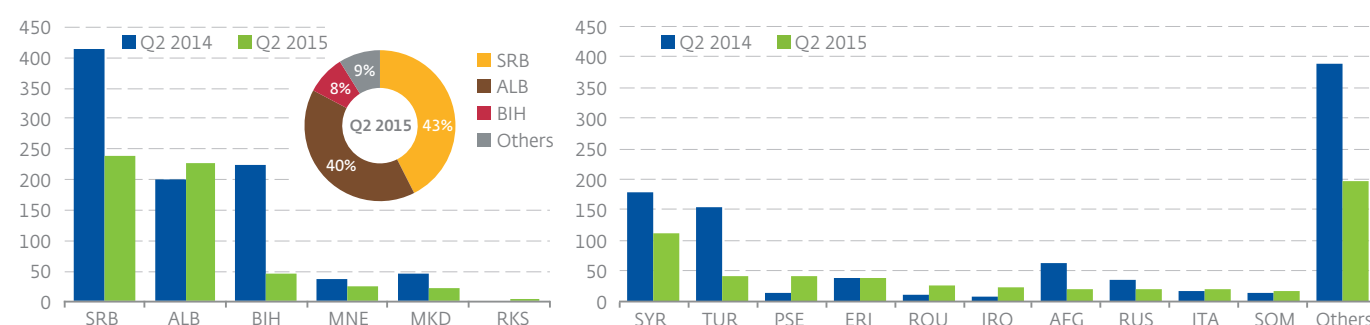
All the top three nationalities registered decreases compared to the previous quarter,

ranging from -19% in the case of Albanians to -56% for Syrians.

Interestingly, very low numbers of people of non-regional nationalities associated with the migratory flow originating from Turkey/Greece were detected while illegally staying inside the six Western Balkan countries. For example, although Syrians and Afghans were the top two nationalities for detected illegal border-crossing during this quarter, only 111 and 21 of these nationals, respectively, were reported for illegal stay in the six Western Balkan countries.

Figure 8. **Only a small share of non-regional migrants detected for illegal border-crossing are discovered as illegal stayers (indicating that they regard the Western Balkans just as a transit area)**

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



Source: WB-RAN data as of 4 August 2015





## **II. FEATURED RISK ANALYSES**

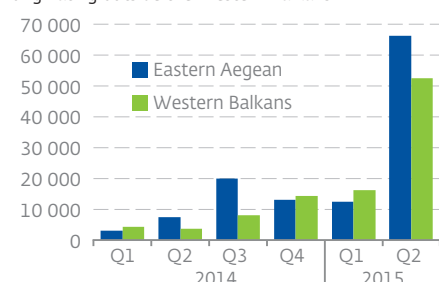
# Large and sustained transit through the Western Balkans of migrants originally entering the EU via Turkey

The number of detected illegal border-crossings by the non-regional transiting flow throughout the analysed period was unprecedented, setting an absolute record since data collection began for the Western Balkans. More precisely, the 54 437 detected illegal border-crossings by non-regional migrants (52 221 between BCPs and 2 216 at BCPs) was comparable to the sum total of detections of non-regional migrants in the past two years (54 692 in 2013 and 2014).

As presented in the WB-ARA 2015 as well as in the previous Western Balkans Quarterly analyses there is a direct link between the non-regional migration flow transiting the Western Balkans and the one affecting the borders of Greece, especially in the Eastern Aegean Sea. Specifically, the high pressure on the Aegean Islands is later echoed on the Western Balkan route with a certain time lag, which is basically the time migrants need to organise their onwards movements (Fig. 9).

Figure 9. **The migration pressure recorded in the Eastern Aegean is later reflected in the Western Balkans**

Detections of illegal border-crossing by migrants originating outside the Western Balkans



Source: FRAN and WB-RAN data as of 5 August 2015

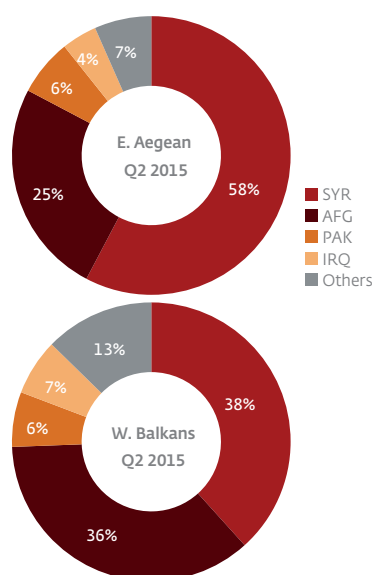
With this observation in mind it can be considered that the record numbers registered in the Western Balkans in the sec-

ond quarter are a direct consequence of the unprecedented number of migrants reported in the Eastern Aegean in the same period. More exactly, the number of illegal border-crossings reported by Greece in the Aegean Islands in Q2 2015 is the highest since data collection began (roughly equal to the totals for this area over the past five years – between 2010 and 2014).

The direct link between the two regions can be also confirmed by the composition of migrants' nationalities (Fig. 10).

Figure 10. **Top nationalities detected in the Eastern Aegean are similar to those in the Western Balkans**

Shares of top nationalities detected for illegal border-crossing



Source: FRAN and WB-RAN data as of 5 August 2015

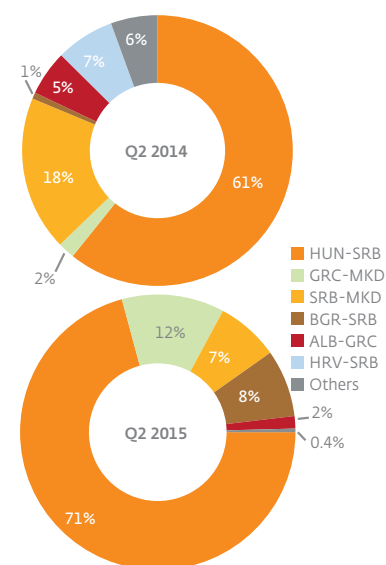
Similar to the previous periods, during the second quarter of 2015 the non-regional migration flow continued to enter the Western Balkans across the southern common borders with Greece and Bulgaria be-

fore heading north and exiting the region almost exclusively across the Hungarian-Serbian border. In line with the surge in the overall flow, virtually all the regional and common border sections reported higher detections throughout Q2.

In the south of the region, judging by the shares of reported detections of illegal border-crossing (Fig. 11), the Bulgarian-Serbian border appears to have increased its appeal as an entry point for non-regional migrants to the Western Balkans in relation to the same period last year.

Figure 11. **The Hungarian-Serbian border still took the highest share of the overall non-regional pressure, while the Greek-former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Bulgarian-Serbian sections increased their importance as preferred entry points**

Detections of illegal border-crossing by non-regional migrants, by border section



Source: WB-RAN data as of 5 August 2015

The same appears to be the case for the border between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece, which accounted for 12% of all detections of non-regional migrants in the Western Balkans. However, the latter development is not entirely new and is likely to have just become more apparent in the data due to increased activity of the border police and the diminished migrants' motivation to transit the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia undetected (see section on [Countermeasures triggered by the increased migratory pressure at regional level](#) overleaf).

In the northern part of the region, the Hungarian-Serbian section remained the busiest border in terms of detected illegal border-crossings associated with non-regional flow and the main point used to exit the region. During the discussed quarter, roughly 37 000 detections of non-regional

migrants were reported from this section, which represents a new quarterly record.

At regional level almost all nationalities manifested increases. Similar to previous periods, Syrians and Afghans ranked first and second, while Pakistanis and Iraqis occupied the third and fourth place, roughly reflecting the above described trends in the Eastern Aegean Sea.

Despite overall lower numbers, during the analysed period an over threefold rise could be observed in detections of African migrants throughout the Western Balkans.

As regards the regions of origin, migrants from Eastern, Central, West and North Africa all contributed to this overall increase.

More precisely, migrants from Central Africa ranked first both in absolute numbers (1 251) and in terms of the largest

increase (+640%), mainly due to the remarkable rises in Congolese and Cameroonians (nine- and sixfold, respectively). West Africans ranked second in terms of numbers (1 174) showing a 175% rise compared to the previous quarter, including mainly Nigerians and Ghanaians (with six- and fourfold rises, respectively). The third place, with a total of 1 024 detections and a 75% increase, was taken by East African migrants, mainly Somalis and Eritreans (with +47% and threefold increases, respectively). Finally, North African nationals ranked fourth, with a total of 622 detections representing a 465% increase, mainly due to increased numbers of Algerians, Sudanese and Moroccans.

The increase in detected Africans in the Western Balkans could be partly explained by the expansion of Turkish Airlines connection network in Africa (see box).

#### **Turkish Airlines has the largest network in Africa**

Turkish Airlines has nearly doubled its seat capacity to Africa from about 38 000 in 2011 to about 70 000 weekly seats at the end of 2014. The carrier is planning further expansion in Africa in 2015 with at least six new destinations. It already boasts the largest network in the continent among foreign carriers, overtaking Air France and Emirates. By the end of 2015, Turkish Airlines will have at least 45 destinations in its African network across 30 countries.

For comparison, Air France, which has the second largest African network among European carriers, offers flights to 34 destinations. Brussels Airlines has 19 African destinations on offer, British Airways 18 and Lufthansa 13.

# Countermeasures triggered by the increased migratory pressure at regional level

The increased pressure exerted by the transiting migration flow, the humanitarian dimension of migration and different vulnerabilities appear to be the factors which have shaped a response of the affected countries.

**Hungary**, pressed by the ever rising number of detections decided to implement a series of measures in order to curb the migratory flow through its territory. These measures began with putting up banners on the streets of Budapest displaying messages aimed at deterring irregular migration, continued with requesting the population's opinion on the phenomenon (through a national survey), before hardening the migration policy and erecting a physical obstacle along the country's southern border.

According to the media, the restrictions of the asylum policy include the creation of a list of safe countries which, if transited by migrants before reaching Hungary, would expose them to a rapid asylum procedure and an immediate return based on readmission agreements. Similarly, migrants already in the asylum procedure will see their claims rejected if they leave accommodation centres for more than 48 hours without approval. These changes entered into force on 1 August 2015.

The physical obstacle (planned finalisation on 31 August) will consist of a temporary fence running along the entire length of the southern border with Serbia.

If implemented as planned, these changes will likely result in accelerated returns of migrants to Serbia based on the bilateral agreement and a lower number of illegal border-crossings at the Hungarian-Serbian border.

However, the impact of these measures will ultimately depend on their effective implementation.

**Serbia**, reacting to the increase in the migratory pressure increased its control activities on the common border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and decided to establish another reception centre in Presevo (with support also from Russia via the Russian-Serbian Humanitarian Centre – RSHC). Hungary, Austria and Germany are supporting the increased control measures with personnel and equipment.

The increased police activities by Serbia at the common border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia appears to have a certain deterrence effect on migrants. Namely, the Serbian authorities reported approximately 43 000 people who have renounced their intention to cross the green border between June and July after seeing police patrols. Nevertheless, many migrants continue to make it across, as the number of expressed intentions for asylum inside Serbia between June and July totalled almost 40 000 according to police statistics.

Out of these 40 000 migrants, only 136 actually submitted official asylum applications (one in every 294), while the rest preferred to avoid registration. The ratio between the expressed intentions and the official applications for asylum appears to have seriously deteriorated compared to 2014 (when one in every 43 actually filed an official claim). This is a further indication that non-regional migrants use asylum systems as a means to avoid detention on transit.

**Kosovo\***, being aware of the increasing migratory pressure and the enhanced con-

trol activities of Serbia, also reportedly decided to increase the surveillance capabilities on their common border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in order to pre-empt a possible flow deflection across their territory. Additional personnel and equipment from other territorial border police units have been re-deployed to this border section.

On 18 June **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** modified the migration legislation in order to provide detected migrants who express the intention to claim asylum with documents allowing them 72 hours to move across the territory and reach one of the reception centres.

This decision appears to have been taken in the attempt to reduce the impact of migration on the lives and security of the migrants. Namely, many non-regional migrants tried to avoid police detection and thus exposed themselves to either dangerous routes (as was presented in our previous report many died struck by trains while walking along train tracks) or to kidnappings, extortions and violence by various criminal groups.

While mitigating the risk to the wellbeing of migrants by giving them no reason to choose dangerous roads or interact with criminal groups, this new legislation appears to have also had an impact on the border security as it was used by migrants for transiting the country rather than reaching reception centres.

Namely, it appears to have accelerated migrants' movements across the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (as after the first registration they can use public transport) and increased the pressure on the common border with Serbia and then

on Hungary's border with Serbia during July and August.

In addition, this decision has also encouraged more migrants to choose the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as the first entry point in the Western Balkans, creating a very high pressure on the country's south border with Greece (between late June and August).

Trying to cope with this increased pressure, on 20 August the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia declared a state of emergency and deployed additional military and police personnel to the southern border with Greece, in order to prevent illegal border-crossing between BCPs.

However, this decision appears to have been reversed on 22 August following very high pressure and clashes between security forces and migrants who were trying to break through the barriers. At the

time of writing this report it was not yet clear if the decision to reopen the border was permanent or temporary. The security forces maintain presence, but just to register the migrants, check their belongings and ensure that they pass through in an orderly fashion so that the flow runs smoothly without creating blockages at bus and train stations after entry. This will keep the flow going smoothly, but will likely increase the pressure further along the route.

If similar measures to seal the border will be reintroduced in the future, they are likely to create a high pressure in the short term and increase security risks at the common border section with Greece. In longer term, such measures can reduce the attractiveness of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for the transiting migrants and probably deflect them to other common sections.



Figure 12. A leaflet distributed by the Red Cross in Gevgelija explaining how to transit the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

**At the regional level,** other counter-measures are likely to be implemented in response to the increased migratory pressure.

However, if these measures are taken in isolation, they are more likely to result in the rerouting of migration flows rather than actually stopping them.

# Factors contributing to the increase in detections of Afghans in the Eastern Aegean Sea and the Western Balkans

Afghan migrants were increasingly reported for illegal border-crossing on the Eastern Aegean Islands during the first six months of 2015. With a total of over 19 000 detections, these nationals accounted for 29% of the overall flow affecting this area. Syrians still ranked first in detections in the Eastern Aegean (over two times the number of Afghans) but considering the nationality swapping practice the real number of Afghans could be higher than statistical data indicate.

As a consequence of the increased detections of Afghans in the Eastern Aegean, their numbers have also risen on the Western Balkan route, where they were the second most detected nationality throughout the first half of the year, very close behind Syrians. Specifically, during the first six months of 2015 there were over 25 000 reported illegal border-crossings by Afghans at the common and regional borders of Western Balkan countries.

This rising trend may be additionally explained by the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan after the retreat of the ISAF and the following developments in Iran, Pakistan and Turkey (countries assessed to be hosting over 5.5 million Afghans between them).

### Afghans living in Iran

#### Push factors

In 2012, the Iranian Bureau of Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs announced that they planned to return 1.6 million unlawful persons and a total of 900 000 refugees to their countries of origin by 2015. It was expected that by 2015, 200 000 refugees would voluntarily return and that 700 000 would no longer be refugees

(this would mean that 700 000 of the refugee-card holders would not have their cards renewed by 2015 and would be expected to return).

In June 2014 media reports emphasised increased pressures by the Iranian authorities to accelerate returns of Afghans. Some reports indicated that in this attempt the authorities were stretching the tripartite Iran-Afghanistan-UNHCR agreement on voluntary return of Afghans from Iran.

Also apparently in line with this policy, media reports between June and December 2014 indicated a reduction by approximately 260 000 of the temporary visas offered to Afghans residing in Iran and not registered as refugees.

More exactly, in June 2014 Iran renewed temporary visas to 760 000 unregistered Afghans for a period of six months (until December 2014). In December 2014, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW), the Iranian authorities again renewed temporary visas, but this time only to 500 000 Afghans, leaving a difference of roughly a quarter-million without a legal status. Moreover, the 500 000 temporary visas which were extended in December were also bound to expire in June 2015 and have currently been extended to the end of November.

#### Rough estimates of the Afghan presence and status in Iran

The Iranian Ministry of Interior estimated a total of around 3 million Afghans to be present on their territory.

By combining different sources of information this total number can be roughly divided into three categories depending on the status enjoyed by the persons in Iran.

UNHCR estimates around 950 000 to be registered as refugees, while IOM estimates between 1 and 1.4 million to be undocumented. Moreover, media reports and HRW data indicate a shrinking third category of people with documents but not registered as refugees (i.e. holders of temporary visas who decreased from roughly 760 000 to 500 000 as mentioned above).

### Afghans living in Pakistan

#### Push factors

According to an IOM report, between January and May 2015 a total number of over 73 000 Afghans returned from Pakistan to Afghanistan. Out of these, only around 6 600 were reported as 'deportees' enforced by the authorities, while the rest or roughly 67 000 were reported as 'spontaneous returnees'. The spontaneous returns are legal, under a tripartite agreement between Pakistan, Afghanistan and UNHCR signed in 2007 and apparently still in force, which allows voluntary repatriation of Afghans and sets an obligation for Afghanistan to accept and integrate them.

However, unconfirmed reports by HRW suggest that the increase in voluntary returns may be more related to Pakistani authorities actually bending the agreement and de facto pushing Afghans to leave as a response to the recent escalation of Taliban terrorist activities.

Pakistan, with the help of UNHCR, was providing Afghans living on their territory with documents called Proof of Registration (PoR), which made their stay legal and allowed them access to certain support. Starting from 2008 (with an 8-month reinstatement in 2010) new PoR are no longer issued. The authorities only extend the va-



lidity of the old ones (currently until the end of 2015), a decision likely to limit the access to basic support for many Afghans (new arrivals and also those currently not registered). The fact that UNHCR can currently process roughly 7 000 people per year and issue refugee documents recognised by the Government can act as a mitigation factor but with limited effect (considering that the number of undocumented persons is estimated at between 1 and 4 million).

It can be assessed that no new PoR, a possible non-extension of previously issued documents beyond 2015, coupled with the right of Pakistani authorities to deport undocumented migrants from their

territory exposes a very high (estimates vary between 1 and over 4 million currently) and possibly increasing (if PoR are not extended beyond 2015) number of Afghans to forced expulsion.

### **Rough estimates of the Afghan presence and status in Pakistan**

According to information presented by different sources Pakistan currently hosts a minimum of roughly 2.5 million Afghans. Out of this total around 1.5 million are registered in possession of Proof of Registration (currently valid until the end of 2015) while another 1 million are currently unregistered.

## **Afghans living in Turkey**

### **Push factors**

Reporting indicates that the time needed for processing the asylum claims in Turkey is very long with appointments for processing being made over one year in advance and in different districts of the country. Because of this situation many Afghans become frustrated and around 14 000 are currently seeking resettlement in a third country. Additionally, there are

no camps for non-Syrian refugees in Turkey and most of the Afghans reside in urban areas.

### **Estimates of the Afghan presence and status in Turkey**

Currently there are 40 000 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey and an extra 10 000 are expected in 2015 according to UNHCR.

## **Conclusion**

All of the above can partially explain the increase in detections of Afghans seen at the external borders (mainly Eastern Mediterranean and, as a consequence, the Western Balkans).

It should also be considered that any further increase of deportation by both Pakistani and Iranian authorities will further fuel the flow of Afghans targeting the external EU border.



Figure 13. **Proof of Registration used by Afghans in Pakistan**





# STATISTICAL ANNEX

## LEGEND

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

**Source:** WB-RAN and FRAN data as of 12 August 2015,  
unless otherwise indicated

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

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

Detections reported by Western Balkan countries and neighbouring EU Member States, by purpose of illegal border-crossing, top five border sections and top ten nationalities

	2014				2015		2015 Q2		per cent of total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	% change on year ago	previous Qtr	
Purpose of Illegal Border-Crossing									
Not specified	3 237	2 698	8 751	27 715	32 802	34 439	1 176	5	61
Irregular migration	3 108	4 571	6 006	9 326	10 993	21 917	379	99	39
Smuggling	66	80	72	67	143	332	315	132	0.6
Other	113	93	91	85	75	116	25	55	0.2
Top Five Sections									
Hungary-Serbia	3 527	2 959	9 762	29 579	36 988	37 766	1 176	2.1	66
FYR Macedonia-Greece	238	413	675	499	591	6 547	1 485	1 008	12
Bulgaria-Serbia	89	27	147	557	912	4 130	1 5196	353	7.3
Albania-Greece	1 540	2 572	2 620	4 666	2 890	3 959	54	37	7
FYR Macedonia-Serbia	483	671	1 082	1 288	2 190	3 845	473	76	6.8
Others	647	800	634	604	442	557	-30	26	1
Top Ten Nationalities									
Syria	1 148	1 000	3 912	6 476	5 559	20 010	1 901	260	35
Afghanistan	1 681	1 232	2 605	5 445	6 439	18 848	1 430	193	33
Albania	1 702	2 947	2 995	4 018	2 710	3 691	25	36	6.5
Iraq	14	31	114	383	1 056	3 414	1 0913	223	6
Pakistan	115	100	107	241	780	3 325	3 225	326	5.9
Congo	50	96	13	31	90	817	751	808	1.4
Bangladesh	42	23	70	176	350	811	3 426	132	1.4
Somalia	102	166	101	66	420	619	273	47	1.1
Palestine	25	88	370	515	276	617	601	124	1.1
Kosovo*	602	865	3 566	18 488	24 617	588	-32	-98	1
Others	1 043	894	1 067	1 354	1 716	4 064	355	137	7.2
Total	6 524	7 442	14 920	37 193	44 013	56 804	663	29	100

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

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

Detections reported by Western Balkan countries and neighbouring EU Member States, by type of entry, purpose of illegal border-crossing, top five border sections and top ten nationalities

	2014				2015		2015 Q2		per cent of total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	% change on year ago	previous Qtr	
Clandestine/Other									
Clandestine	258	272	477	455	315	2 072	662	558	92
Others	41	37	113	90	61	133	259	118	5.9
Not specified	3	1	0	0	18	36	3 500	100	1.6
Purpose of Illegal Border-Crossing									
Irregular migration	114	107	181	378	332	2 162	1 921	551	96
Smuggling	0	1	3	0	1	36	3 500	3 500	1.6
Not specified	169	189	392	154	42	31	-84	-26	1.4
Other	19	13	14	13	19	12	-7.7	-37	0.5
Top Five Sections									
FYR Macedonia-Serbia	28	23	35	116	195	1 943	8 348	896	87
Bulgaria-Serbia	0	6	9	34	19	114	1 800	500	5.1
Hungary-Serbia	33	91	203	130	78	63	-31	-19	2.8
FYR Macedonia-Albania	19	15	21	27	5	39	160	680	1.7
FYR Macedonia-Greece	5	5	55	19	30	36	620	20	1.6
Others	217	170	267	219	67	46	-73	-31	2.1
Top Ten Nationalities									
Syria	44	105	107	110	86	1 291	1 130	1 401	58
Afghanistan	42	93	274	293	197	641	589	225	29
Iraq	1	6	7	6	9	117	1 850	1 200	5.2
Somalia	8	2	9	6	0	30	1 400	n.a.	1.3
Pakistan	21	23	17	8	4	26	13	550	1.2
Albania	28	18	33	42	29	18	0	-38	0.8
Nigeria	26	0	3	0	1	15	n.a.	1 400	0.7
Iran	4	0	1	0	2	11	n.a.	450	0.5
Algeria	3	11	24	1	7	11	0	57	0.5
Mali	4	5	5	0	2	10	100	400	0.4
Others	121	47	110	79	57	71	51	25	3.2
Total	302	310	590	545	394	2 241	623	469	100

Table 3. **Facilitators**

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

Place of Detection	2014				2015		2015 Q2		per cent of total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	% change on		
							year ago	previous Qtr	
Land	206	178	242	418	448	551	210	23	96
Inland	35	11	44	65	66	21	91	-68	3.7
Sea	4	2	6	2	3	0	n.a.	n.a.	
Air	2	2	0	1	0	0	n.a.	n.a.	
Top Ten Nationalities									
Serbia	111	89	92	254	285	338	280	19	59
FYR Macedonia	27	9	14	40	36	49	444	36	8.6
Albania	33	36	61	60	49	48	33	-2	8.4
Bulgaria	11	7	20	22	30	32	357	6.7	5.6
Greece	13	14	22	28	21	31	121	48	5.4
Not specified	7	11	18	18	27	13	18	-52	2.3
Hungary	9	2	6	5	10	11	450	10	1.9
Kosovo*	6	6	6	2	13	6	0	-54	1
Syria	0	0	15	0	6	6	n.a.	0	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6	3	1	15	18	6	100	-67	1
Others	24	16	37	42	22	32	100	45	5.6
Total	247	193	292	486	517	572	196	11	100

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

Table 4. **Illegal stay**

Detections of illegal stay reported by Western Balkan countries and neighbouring EU Member States, by place of detection and top ten nationalities

Place of Detection	2014				2015		2015 Q2		per cent of total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	% change on		
							year ago	previous Qtr	
Land	1 133	1 299	1 611	1 232	925	1 595	23	72	64
Inland	1 082	1 349	926	2 096	1 185	778	-42	-34	31
Not specified	103	167	114	158	99	110	-34	11	4.4
Top Ten Nationalities									
Serbia	728	1 032	864	684	700	791	-23	13	32
Syria	339	275	415	1 439	391	547	99	40	22
Albania	161	249	215	245	167	149	-40	-11	6
Afghanistan	117	88	76	62	44	127	44	189	5.1
FYR Macedonia	101	127	187	130	74	100	-21	35	4
Iraq	10	16	44	60	31	71	344	129	2.9
Turkey	61	175	111	90	74	63	-64	-15	2.5
Eritrea	65	60	90	68	88	57	-5	-35	2.3
Palestine	20	18	29	114	7	57	217	714	2.3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	55	50	50	73	62	56	12	-9.7	2.3
Others	661	725	570	521	571	465	-36	-19	19
Total	2 318	2 815	2 651	3 486	2 209	2 483	-12	12	100

Table 5. **Refusals of entry**

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

Border Type	2014				2015		2015 Q2		per cent of total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	% change on		
							year ago	previous Qtr	
Land	7 688	9 503	13 269	9 354	7 762	9 046	-4.8	17	92
Air	589	685	741	853	704	757	11	7.5	7.7
Sea	3	9	19	2	3	24	167	700	0.2
Top Ten Nationalities									
Albania	1 966	2 735	2 541	2 770	2 206	2 763	1	25	28
Serbia	2 367	2 309	2 575	2 426	1 931	1 715	-26	-11	17
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 347	1 317	1 687	1 359	1 257	1 379	4.7	9.7	14
Turkey	337	417	812	693	554	578	39	4.3	5.9
FYR Macedonia	487	455	568	506	433	463	1.8	6.9	4.7
Kosovo*	305	299	886	289	263	291	-2.7	11	3
Bulgaria	187	264	298	239	223	265	0.4	19	2.7
Germany	36	118	578	82	79	197	67	149	2
Moldova	38	136	349	80	61	181	33	197	1.8
Croatia	125	112	133	130	282	168	50	-40	1.7
Others	1 085	2 035	3 602	1 635	1 180	1 827	-10	55	19
Total	8 280	10 197	14 029	10 209	8 469	9 827	-3.6	16	100

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

Table 6. **Applications for asylum**

Applications for international protection reported by Western Balkan countries and neighbouring EU Member States, by top ten nationalities

	2014				2015		2015 Q2		per cent of total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	% change on		
							year ago	previous Qtr	
Top Ten Nationalities									
Afghanistan	2 031	1 812	3 447	6 889	5 772	15 262	742	164	35
Syria	2 455	1 908	4 899	7 952	5 561	13 018	582	134	30
Iraq	121	213	355	845	1 423	3 856	1 710	171	8.9
Pakistan	520	509	537	753	1 180	3 329	554	182	7.7
Bangladesh	156	158	263	371	528	918	481	74	2.1
Kosovo*	172	368	3 046	17 879	24 268	665	81	-97	1.5
Iran	209	545	203	518	318	563	3.3	77	1.3
Palestine	54	118	378	522	361	501	325	39	1.2
Nigeria	145	169	197	173	201	461	173	129	1.1
Congo	33	73	20	45	111	455	523	310	1
Others	2 170	2 331	2 123	2 698	3 117	4 405	89	41	10
Total	8 066	8 204	15 468	38 645	42 840	43 433	429	1.4	100

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

Table 7. **Document fraud**

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

	2014				2015		2015 Q2		per cent of total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	% change on year ago	previous Qtr	
Border type									
Land	137	114	110	171	146	142	25	-2.7	59
Air	74	48	50	59	76	88	83	16	37
Sea	22	24	51	18	23	8	-67	-65	3.3
Not specified	0	0	2	0	0	3	n.a.	n.a.	1.2
Document Type									
Passports	131	94	131	117	155	120	28	-23	50
Stamps	12	23	8	15	12	51	122	325	21
ID cards	39	28	36	87	49	50	79	2	21
Residence permits	20	14	20	12	15	13	-7.1	-13	5.4
Visas	6	6	5	7	12	7	17	-42	2.9
Unknown	25	21	13	10	2	0	n.a.	n.a.	
Fraud Type									
False-counterfeit	28	57	57	80	57	126	121	121	52
Authentic-impostor	98	54	73	64	79	40	-26	-49	17
False-no more details	3	2	20	20	19	16	700	-16	6.6
False-page substitution	3	3	3	7	8	13	333	63	5.4
False-image substitution	15	6	16	19	18	11	83	-39	4.6
Others	86	64	44	58	64	35	-45	-45	15
Top Ten Nationalities									
Albania	43	61	57	81	100	85	39	-15	35
Serbia	31	18	15	23	20	36	100	80	15
Kosovo*	81	68	64	32	43	34	-50	-21	14
Syria	18	2	28	47	23	26	1 200	13	11
Turkey	10	7	8	14	9	21	200	133	8.7
Pakistan	3	0	0	0	1	9	n.a.	800	3.7
Iraq	0	0	5	3	5	7	n.a.	40	2.9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2	3	3	0	4	7	133	75	2.9
FYR Macedonia	9	4	3	7	3	4	0	33	1.7
Afghanistan	1	4	8	9	4	2	-50	-50	0.8
Others	35	19	22	32	33	10	-47	-70	4.1
Top Ten Countries of Issuance of Documents									
Albania	38	37	50	55	72	56	51	-22	23
Serbia	25	21	16	25	28	45	114	61	19
Greece	14	16	23	22	23	27	69	17	11
Italy	10	8	8	29	23	18	125	-22	7.5
Turkey	3	2	3	4	4	13	550	225	5.4
Bulgaria	22	14	15	14	12	10	-29	-17	4.1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	2	2	0	3	8	300	167	3.3
Kosovo*	3	3	2	2	5	7	133	40	2.9
Romania	0	2	4	15	3	5	150	67	2.1
Belgium	1	3	9	8	2	4	33	100	1.7
Others	116	78	81	74	70	48	-38	-31	20
Total	233	186	213	248	245	241	30	-1.6	100

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



Explanatory note

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

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

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

Each section in the table (Reporting country, Border type, Place of detection, Top five border section and Top ten nationalities) refers to total detections reported by WB-RAN countries and to neighbouring land border detections reported by EU Member States.



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