

Situation at EU's external borders in January: Lower pressure on Eastern border

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The number of illegal border crossings at EU's external borders in the first month of 2022 reached 13 160, 78% more than in January 2021 and 23% more than in 2020, according to preliminary calculations.

The number of arrivals continues to be above pre-pandemic levels as demonstrated by the data from 2021. The total number of illegal border-crossings in 2021 was just short of 200 000, the highest number since 2017.

In January, the most significant increase could be observed on the Western Balkans route with 5 826 arrivals, 148% more than a year ago. Syria, Afghanistan and Turkey were the top three countries of origin of migrants on this route.

At the same time, the pressure on EU's Eastern border dropped by nearly 75%. The route saw an intense pressure as of May 2021 with a more than tenfold increase in comparison to 2020.

On the Central Mediterranean route, the number of arrivals amounted to 2 150, 107% more than in the same month last year. Two out of three migrants arrived from Libya while the rest from Tunisia. Nationals of Egypt, Bangladesh and Cote d'Ivoire represented the majority of the arrivals from Libya while Tunisians represented about 67% of the migrants registered from Tunisia.

In line with seasonal trends related to weather conditions, the number of detections on the Western Mediterranean route dropped by 55% to 693. Nearly 60% of the migrants registered on this route were nationals of Algeria.

The Western African route experienced an increase of 50% with 3 007 detections. Half of the departures on this route occurred from Morocco.

The situation on the Eastern Mediterranean route did not undergo significant changes and the number of detections rose 28% to 1 163 compared to January 2021 when the number of detections was 911, among which 303 at Greece's external borders.

At the same time, the number of migrants arriving in Cyprus continued to grow. In the first month of 2022, there were 850 detections, 48% higher than last year. The most represented nationalities were nationals of Congo (Kinshasa), Syria and Nigeria.

In the beginning of the year, the Channel continued to see a significant increase in irregular migratory flows from the European Union towards the United Kingdom. In January 2022, the number of sea crossings detected on exit increased by 273% compared to January 2021. Over 2 500 irregular migrants were detected on both sides of the Channel, including attempts of departure and successful crossings.

