

Migratory situation at EU's borders in August: Detections on the rise

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The number of illegal border crossings at Europe's external borders in the first eight months of 2021 reached over 103 630, 64% more than the total from a year ago when various COVID-19 restrictions were in place, according to preliminary calculations.

In August, Frontex registered 17 788 illegal border crossings, 53% more than in the same month last year.

1058 illegal border crossings were detected at the external Eastern land borders in August, a drop of 67% compared to 3242 in July. So far this year, more than 5300 detections have been recorded. Lithuania's land border with Belarus remains the most affected border section with 4116 illegal border crossings.

Central Mediterranean

Between January and August, national authorities registered around 41 000 illegal border crossings on the Central Mediterranean route, an increase of over 90% compared with last year.

In August alone, there were 8790 detections, 61% more than in the same month of last year. Most of these arrivals were reported on the Libyan and Tunisian corridors.

Here are some of the reasons for this significant increase.

FOCUS ON: Central Mediterranean route

The Central Mediterranean continued to account for the highest share of illegal border crossings in August. Most of the migrants came from Tunisia, Bangladesh and Egypt.

- In Libya, security and political instability continue to represent push factors for irregular migration towards the EU. Apart from being a key hub for migrant smuggling from Africa to Europe, Libya remains a destination country for migrants. In the first eight months of 2021, among the 41 000 migrants who were reported on the Central Mediterranean route, 19 096 departed from Libya.
- Tunisia is the second main last departure country for migrants registered in Italy arriving on the Central Mediterranean route. Figures related to Tunisian migrants registered in Italy continue to be on the rise. Socio-political and economic instability coupled with negative and lasting impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis are increasing the discontent of the population and might exacerbate existing push factors in terms of irregular migration towards the EU.
- So far this year, Egyptians have become the third main nationality registered in the Central Mediterranean, reported mainly from Libya, followed by Egypt, Turkey, Greece and Tunisia. The total number of Egyptian migrants arriving in Italy by sea accounts for 3 379, representing a 542% increase compared to the same period in 2020.

Western Mediterranean

Meanwhile, Frontex has seen a slight increase in the number of detections on the Western Mediterranean route towards Europe. So far this year, 10 160 illegal entries have been detected, 16% more than last year.

In August, 1526 illegal entries were detected, 27% fewer than last year.

Most migrants on this route came from Algeria, Morocco and sub-Saharan Africa.

Western Africa

In the analysed period, Frontex has seen a significant increase on the Western African route. Between January and August, authorities detected 8562 illegal border crossings, an increase of 118% compared with last year.

In August, 1008 illegal crossings were registered on this route.

In 2021, most migrants originated from sub-Saharan Africa (67%), followed by nationals of Morocco.

Western Balkans

An estimated 27 180 illegal border crossings occurred on the Western Balkan route between January and August, 99% more than last year.

The increase can be attributed to the resumption of migratory movements after the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

Migrants from Syria, Afghanistan and Morocco accounted for most detections on this route.

In August, an estimated 3980 illegal crossings were detected, 119% more than in the year before.

Eastern Mediterranean

The Eastern Mediterranean has seen a decrease in illegal border crossings after a peak in irregular migration in April 2021.

In the first eight months of this year, the number of detections was about 11 030, **25% less** than last year.

In August, authorities in the region registered 1382 illegal crossings, 11% more than last year. The main detected nationalities were Syrians, Turkish, and Afghans.

See our migratory map for more details <https://frontex.europa.eu/we-know/migratory-map/>

NUMBER OF ILLEGAL BORDER-CROSSINGS JAN-AUG 2020/2021

Route Name



Total number
of incidents

Percentage change
from last year

FRONTEx

