



**347**

Migrants interviewed



**46%**

of respondents reported the use of facilitation



**73%**

Travelled throughout the country by walking



**42%**

Travelled by bus



**53%**

Travelled by taxi

(Multiple answers possible)

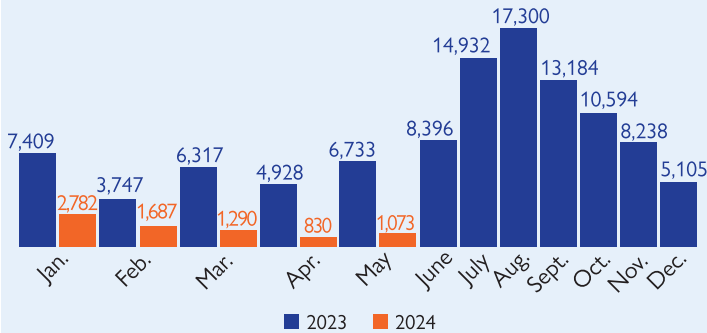


**1,073**

SCRM recorded in May 2024

This report provides insights into the profiles, experiences and journeys of migrants transiting through the Republic of Serbia. Data was collected from 1 to 31 May 2024 together with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia (SCRM). The sample consists of 347 interviewed migrants in Asylum Centres (AC) Sjenica, (AC) Tutin, (AC) Krnjaca, and Reception Centres (RC) Bujanovac, (RC) Presevo, (RC) Pirot across the country.

In April 2024, the SCRM reported a total of 830 recorded migrants. In May 2024, the total number of migrants recorded by SCRM was 1,073.



**PROFILES**



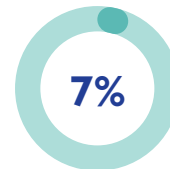
Syrian Arab Republic



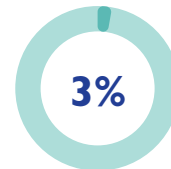
Afghanistan



Morocco



Pakistan



India

Figure 1: Top five countries of origin (n=347)

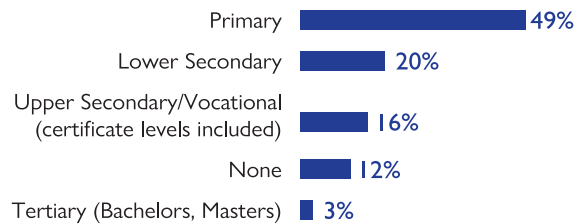


Figure 2: Highest level of educational attainment (n=347)



**74%**  
Single



**23%**  
Married



**95%**  
Male

**5%**  
Female

Figure 3: Marital status (n=347)  
(Divorced and/or widowed made up 3%)

Figure 4: Percentages of interviewed migrants disaggregated by sex (n=347)

**KEY FINDINGS**

- In May 2024, the number of SCRM-recorded migrants increased by 29 per cent, compared to April 2024.
- In this sample, though most entries reported were from Bulgaria (42%) and North Macedonia (42%), a fraction entered via airport (6%) and from Kosovo\* (6%) as well as Romania (3%).
- In this sample, 46 per cent of respondents reported the use of facilitation. Sixty-three per cent of those who entered from Bulgaria reported to have been facilitated. Among those who crossed from North Macedonia, 32 per cent used such services.
- Respondents reported that the average cost of entry from Bulgaria was 1,500 EUR, and 700 EUR from North Macedonia.
- Key informant interviews revealed that, due to the increased border patrols, it is becoming increasingly challenging to cross borders into Serbia, particularly from Bulgaria.

## JOURNEYS

Bulgaria and North Macedonia remain the main entry points into Serbia. In May 2024, 42 per cent of respondents entered from Bulgaria and another 42 per cent from North Macedonia. Six per cent reported entering via plane. Half of the airport entries reported were nationals of India, Türkiye, Burundi, and Nigeria. The remaining four per cent of the respondents entered from Montenegro, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Romania. All the entries from Romania in this sample were nationals of Morocco.

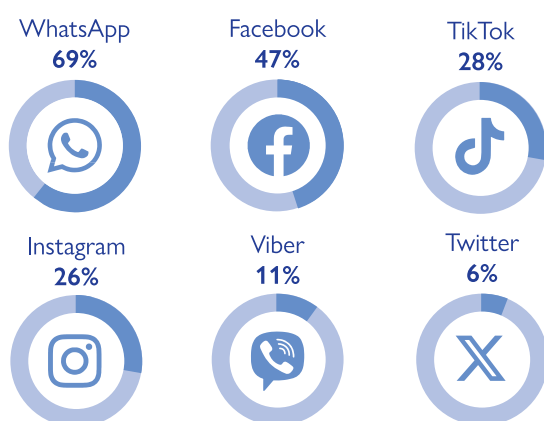


Figure 5: Most frequently cited platforms migrants use to plan their journeys (n=347)  
(Multiple answers possible)

## BORDER CROSSING TRENDS

Forty-six per cent of respondents reported that they used facilitation to cross borders during their journey. Sixty-three per cent of respondents who entered from Bulgaria reported being facilitated, while thirty-two per cent reported having used such services to enter from North Macedonia. The majority (75%) of respondents reported travelling with a group, out of whom 30 per cent reported travelling with facilitators. Respondents who confirmed border crossing facilitation and stated the price, paid on average 1,200 EUR. The reported cost of entry from Bulgaria (1,500 EUR) was more than double than from North Macedonia (700 EUR).

Twenty-three per cent of respondents reported that they had attempted and failed to cross a border at least once. Out of those, seven per cent reported this to have happened under facilitation. Of those respondents who stated that they had attempted and failed to cross a border, 92 per cent were returned by the authorities, while 7 per cent reported route closure (1% reported other). Migrants report route closure when an usual route becomes difficult to pass due to increased border police patrols. The Bulgarian route has become increasingly difficult to pass which is why migrants reported rerouting their journeys through North Macedonia.

## REASONS FOR LEAVING

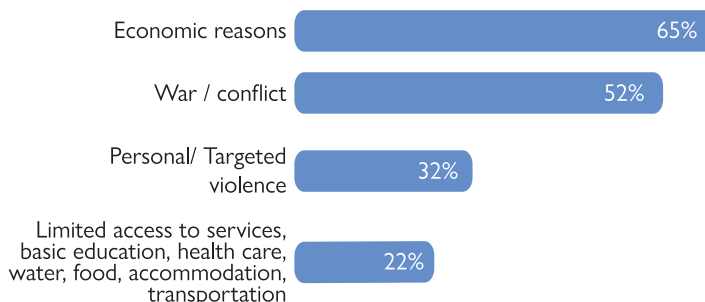


Figure 6: Reason for leaving the country of origin (n=347)  
(Multiple answers possible)

Of those surveyed, 60 per cent reported residing in a transit country for longer than a year. Türkiye remained the most frequently cited country (80%), followed by Greece (14%) and Lebanon (3%). Sixty-five per cent stated they had left due to the deteriorating economic conditions while fifty-three per cent stated the fear of deportation as their main reason. Personal targeted violence was the third most common reason reported, at 38 per cent.

## INTENDED DESTINATION COUNTRIES

Figure 7 below provides a percentage breakdown of the top five intended countries of destination:

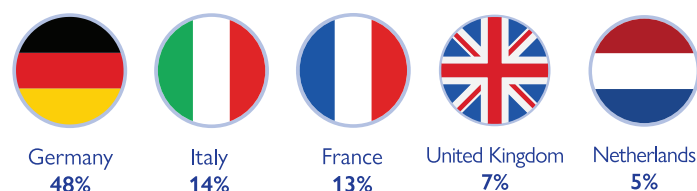


Figure 7: Top five countries of destination reported by migrants (n=347)

Thirty-three per cent of the respondents indicated that their choice of destination was influenced by recommendations from relatives and friends. This was followed by, appealing socio-economic conditions (22%). Germany, the main destination attracts the respondents mainly due to perceived safety (68%), easier access to asylum procedures (51%), and appealing socio-economic conditions (44%). Among the respondents, the top three nationalities which intended to reach Germany were nationals of the Syrian Arab Republic (72%), Afghanistan (71%), and Iraq (71%).

## SPECIAL FOCUS – INFORMAL LABOUR

To contextualize the journeys, experiences, and complex needs of migrants on the move, IOM, together with SCRM, carries out group interviews with specific migrant groups every month. This section is not representative but aims to give context to the quantitative data, by portraying one of the many nuanced and diverse experiences of migrants transiting through Serbia. In May, IOM carried out interviews with 13 people who were informally employed.

- Migrants disclosed working in diverse labour activities nearby centres, notably on construction sites and factories, chicken farms, markets, etc. One individual stated they were selling their artwork independently in the streets of Belgrade. Several interviewees mentioned securing employment at the same location, such as the chicken farm near a centre. They continued in explaining they got the jobs through recruitment by employees or employers visiting the camps and offering positions. Key informants explained that migrants often seized unofficial employment opportunities due to their ability to initiate asylum applications. The process affords them the ability to work for six months during the processing period and subsequently continue working informally.
- Interviewees described receiving daily cash payments ranging from 10 to 80 EUR, working between 7 to 12 hours per day. Interviewees revealed they were satisfied with the conditions and have added that the employers often provide lunch and transportation to and from the centre. However, one individual earning ten euros per day (works every day) reported that fee to be insufficient due to high prices in Serbia and that the earned amount is usually spent by the end of the day.
- Some individuals did report being deceived. An individual, who initially possessed a work permit, reported being promised 500 EUR per month along with accommodation, neither of which was fulfilled. They recounted being pressured to surrender their passport (which they refused), receiving only 250 EUR in pay, and being provided inhumane accommodation. When they attempted to resign, their employer reported them to the authorities, resulting in the revocation of their work permit. Another individual, although they did not complain about their employer, mentioned that their employer had promised to help them with the asylum process in Serbia and to find an attorney. The interviewee revealed they received 150 EUR weekly, on time. The individual wants to remain in Serbia and establish a private company which would export Serbian goods such as wine, to various countries.
- One individual reported being exploited and forced to work for the smugglers while they were in the north of the country. They were promised assistance to bring them over the border into Western Europe, which did not occur as the individual is still in Serbia. The individual explained that they were not given a choice and were threatened. Eventually, the individual escaped from the north of the country to the southern part of Serbia and stated they intended to remain in Serbia.

## METHODOLOGY

This report uses a multi-source and multi-method approach with the aim of providing insights into the profiles, experiences, needs, movement patterns and intentions of migrants transiting through Serbia.

### Survey interviews with migrants

The questionnaire is administered via Kobo Toolbox and collects information on the age, sex and nationalities of respondents, information about their journeys to Serbia, recorded numbers information and movement modalities within the country. The survey is anonymized, voluntary and respondents do not receive compensation for participation. Respondents can choose not to answer any question and can withdraw their consent at any moment.

Some information which serves as context or explanation for particular concepts or trends are repetitive in each report, as it is important for new readers to be able to understand the information.

Data was collected from 1 to 31 May 2024 in RCs/ACs (AC Sjenica, AC Tutin, AC Krnjaca, AC Obrenovac, RC Bujanovac, RC Presevo, RC Pirot).

### Key informant interviews

Key informants can help provide information on the modus operandi of migrant mobility. The purpose of the key informant interviews is to contextualize the quantitative data gathered through the survey.

### Special focus - group interviews

Group interviews are carried out with migrants inside the centres and are conducted by IOM, together with SCRM, who are trained in leading qualitative focus group discussions with vulnerable populations. SCRM is always present in the centres. The information is not representative and does not intend to draw general conclusions about migration nor all migrants in Serbia.

## LIMITATIONS

The data collection is conducted in the context of the following limitations:

1. This data is based on a convenience sample of migrants in the survey locations during the time frame indicated and can therefore not be generalized to the broader population of migrants in Serbia, or anywhere else.
2. The data collection is limited to the RCs/ACs; therefore, no data collection occurs outside of the setting of a centre. Entry points, bus stations, and railroads are known locations of migrant movements, however, in Serbia IOM and SCRM did not collect data at such