



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 11 December 2013
(OR. en)**

16045/13

LIMITE

**FRONT 170
COSI 151
ASIM 102
COMIX 603**

NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Final report on operation PERKŪNAS

Final report on Operation PERKŪNAS

CHAPTER I

1. Background of Operation PERKŪNAS, general description and operational methodology

During the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), following the tradition well-established by previous EU Presidency Member States, the State Border Guard Service at the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania initiated and organised Operation PERKŪNAS with the main goal of identifying the link between illegal EU external border crossings and secondary movements of irregular migrants within the EU and the Schengen Area. Frontex contributed to the operation by supporting the Lithuanian Authority in collecting data and by making its Risk Analysis Unit available to prepare the chapter of the report concerning irregular migration at the EU external borders. Operation PERKŪNAS was a follow-up to the previous operations HERMES, MITRAS, DEMETER, BALDER and APHRODITE initiated by the EU Member States during their Presidency of the EU Council.

Operation PERKŪNAS lasted for two consecutive weeks from 30 September 2013 00:00 UTC to 13 October 2013 23:59 UTC with the participation of 23 Member States of the European Union (EU MS) and 2 Schengen Associated Countries (SAC)¹. It involved interceptions of irregular migrants over the above mentioned period, at external borders and on the territory of the participating Member States, excluding those overstayers who were detected either at border crossing points while voluntarily leaving a visa-issuing Member State or on the territory of the visa-issuing Member State. Overstayers detected in other than visa-issuing Member States were within the scope of the operation.

Data were gathered during the operation through a reporting template in the form of an Excel spreadsheet which was completed and sent electronically by the participating Member States to the Lithuanian authorities for every incident involving the interception of irregular migrants. It should be noted that the reporting template did not include any personal data of the intercepted irregular migrants.

All data reported by participating Member States were gathered, processed and analysed by the staff of the Lithuanian State Border Guard Service. An operational analyst from the Frontex Risk Analysis Unit was present at the headquarters of the LTU Border Guards during the implementation of Operation PERKŪNAS in order to gather, verify and analyse information related to the detection of irregular migrants at the EU external borders.

The operation was carried out using the available capacity of the Member States and Frontex, with no additional costs.

¹ 23 Member States of the European Union and 2 Schengen Associated Countries – participants in Operation PERKUNAS –, hereafter referred to as ‘Member States’ in this document.

Types of data collected during the Operation PERKŪNAS

➤ Details of interception

- Detecting Member State
- Date and time of detection
- Location (nearest city, BCP) of interception of irregular migrants
- Means of transportation used by irregular migrants at the time of detection

➤ Details of irregular migrants (personal data were not collected)

- Nationality
- Gender
- Adult/Minor

➤ Routes

- Main routes followed by irregular migrants before interception including means of transportation used
- Point and date of entry at the external border before interception
- Intended route and final destination within the participating Member States

➤ Modi operandi

- Document fraud detection;
- Asylum application after or during detection;
- Indications of facilitated illegal immigration;
- Additional relevant comments and details.

2. Coordination of Operation PERKŪNAS

Operation PERKŪNAS was initiated and coordinated by the State Border Guard Service at the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania in close cooperation with Frontex. The operation was conducted on the basis of an operational plan delivered to participating Member States before the start of the operation.

In accordance with the provisions of the operational plan for Operational PERKŪNAS, each participating Member State was requested to appoint a national contact point to be responsible for coordinating the operation in their respective Member State as well as for gathering and forwarding the completed reporting templates to the National Coordination Centre of the Lithuanian State Border Guard Service.

3. Participants in Operation PERKŪNAS

Participation in Operation PERKŪNAS was very active, with 25 participating Member States – 23 EU MS and 2 SAC: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Frontex contributed to the operation by supporting the Lithuanian State Border Guard Service in processing the data and by making its Risk Analysis Unit available to prepare the chapter of the report concerning irregular migration at the EU external borders.

The European network for cross-border cooperation in the area of law enforcement in the waterborne transport domain, AQUAPOL, contributed to Operation PERKŪNAS with the results gathered through the AQUAPOL network.

4. Objectives of the operation

The objectives of Operation PERKŪNAS were as follows:

- Consolidate joint measures and achieve an impact on illegal immigration.
- Examine the link between illegal border crossings of the EU external border and intra-Schengen (intra-EU) secondary movements.
- Depict the situation as regards intra-Schengen (intra-EU) secondary movements.
- Foster co-operation among competent national authorities of the EU MS/SAC and FRONTEX.
- Contribute to development of indicators for regular data collection on intra-Schengen (intra-EU) secondary movements.

5. Summary of the operational results

On the basis of the data provided by the participating Member States, the following results were achieved:

CHAPTER II

1. General description of the results

1.1 Results by participating Member State

During the operational period, 2 888 incidents were reported to the National Coordination Centre of the Lithuanian State Border Guard Service by all the participating Member States, with a total number of 10 459 irregular migrants intercepted during Operation PERKŪNAS.

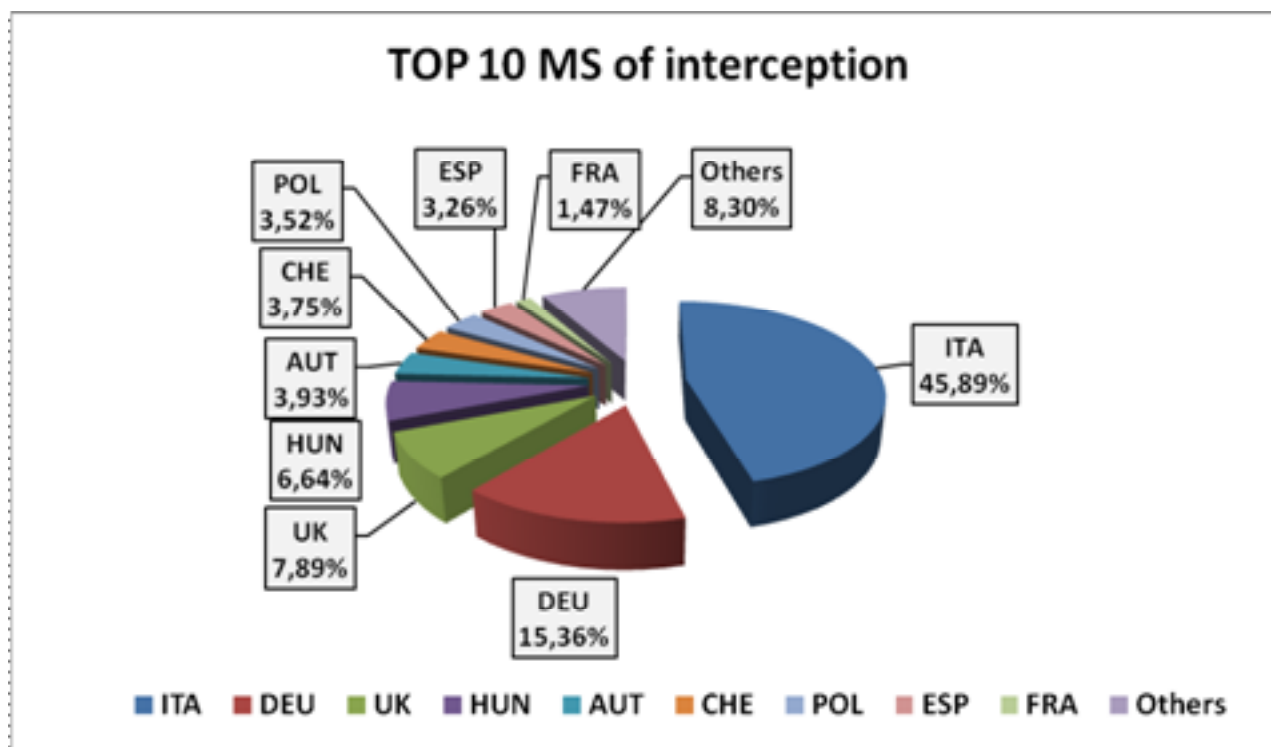
Reported incidents by Member State

Member State	No of incidents	Member State	No of incidents
DEU	730	ROU	35
POL	320	DNK	29
CHE	294	FIN	28
ESP	273	SVN	28
ITA	234	LTU	15
HUN	232	BGR	14
AUT	140	CZE	14
NLD	133	SVK	12
FRA	110	LVA	8
BEL	75	PRT	5
CYP	65	EST	3
FIN	51	MLT	1
NOR	39		
TOTAL: 2 888 INCIDENTS			

Intercepted irregular migrants by Member States

Member State	Intercepted irregular migrants	Member State	Intercepted irregular migrants
ITA	4 800	NOR	81
DEU	1 606	DNK	55
UK	825	ROU	54
HUN	694	LTU	44
AUT	411	SVN	39
CHE	392	BGR	26
POL	368	CZE	24
ESP	341	SVK	31
FRA	154	LVA	13
NLD	140	PRT	5
BEL	127	EST	5
CYP	123	MLT	1
FIN	100		
TOTAL: 10 459 INTERCEPTED IRREGULAR MIGRANTS			

The largest proportion (48,89%) of interceptions was reported by Italy, with 4 800 intercepted irregular migrants. The second (15,36%) and third (7,89%) largest proportions of interceptions were reported by Germany (1 606 intercepted irregular migrants) and the United Kingdom (825 intercepted irregular migrants) respectively. The remaining seven Member States in the TOP 10 by the number of intercepted irregular migrants are ranked as follows: Hungary (694=6,64%), Austria (411=3,93%), Switzerland (392=3,75%), Poland (368=3,52%), Spain (341=3,26%) and France (154=1,47%).

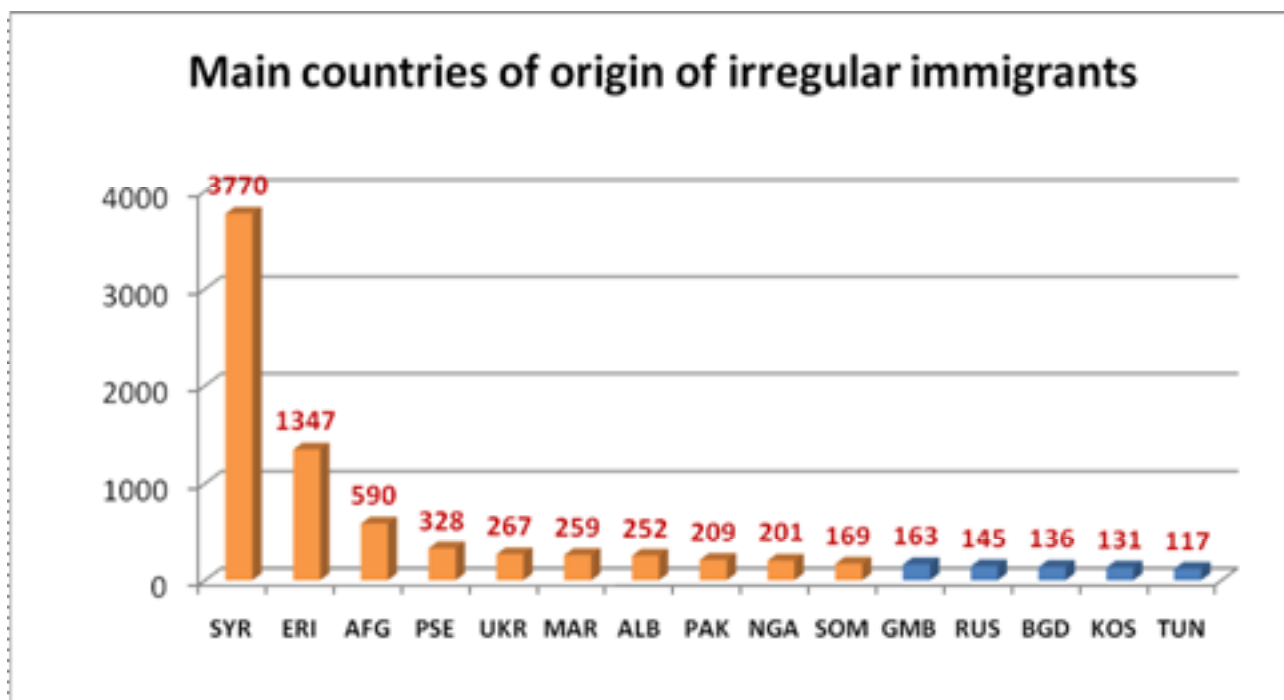


The European network for cross-border cooperation in the area of law enforcement in the waterborne transport domain, AQUAPOL, reported the detection of 166 irregular migrants during the timeframe of Operation PERKŪNAS.

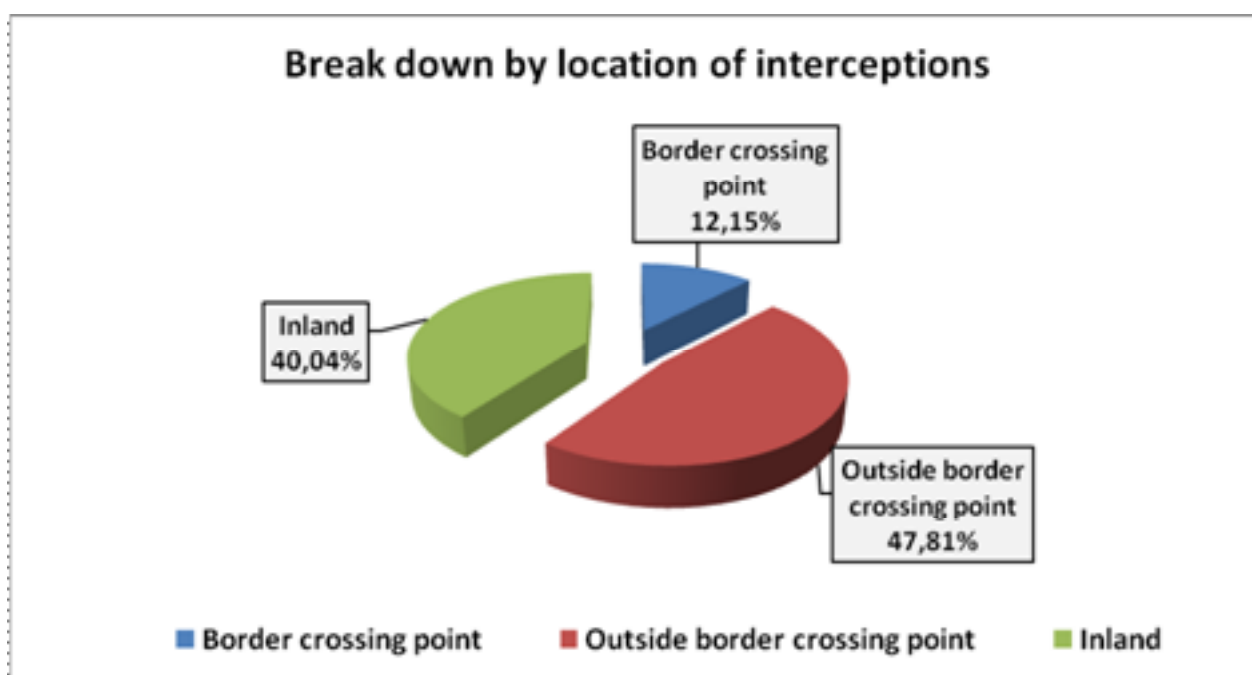
1.2 Intercepted irregular migrants, broken down by nationality¹ and location of interception

The overall number of intercepted irregular migrants (10 459) includes individuals originating from 143 third countries. Syrian nationals comprise far the largest proportion (36%). Eritrean (12,88%) and Afghan (5,64%) nationals comprise the second and third largest proportions of the overall number of intercepted irregular migrants.

¹ All the nationalities of detected or intercepted irregular migrants presented in this document are both confirmed and claimed.



The majority of irregular migrants (47,81%) were intercepted at the border, outside border crossing points, the top five nationalities being Syrian, Afghan, Eritrean, Moroccan and Pakistani. The second largest proportion (40,04%) of irregular migrants were intercepted on the territory of participating Member States, the top five nationalities being Syrian, Eritrean, Palestinian, Gambian and Afghan. 12,15% of irregular migrants were detected at border crossing points. The top five nationalities in the latter category were as follows: Ukrainian, Syrian, Palestinian, Afghan and Russian.



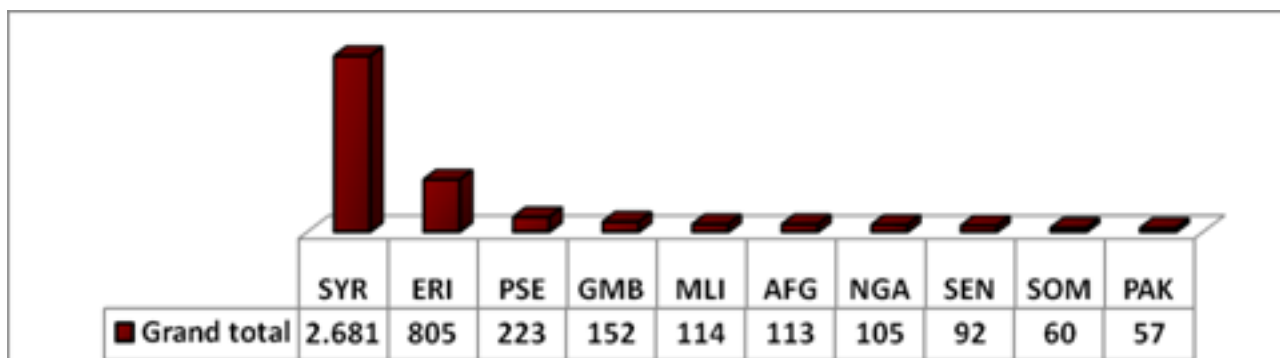
2. Participating Member States with the largest TOP 10 number of interceptions

The results of the operation showed the variation in the magnitude of the impact of irregular migration on participating Member States. The most affected participating Member States are both transit and destination countries for irregular migrants.

2.1 Italy

The top-ranking participating Member State was Italy with a total of 4 800 intercepted irregular migrants, including 2 681 Syrian, 805 Eritrean, 223 Palestinian, 152 Gambian and 114 Malian nationals, as well as nationals of other third countries.

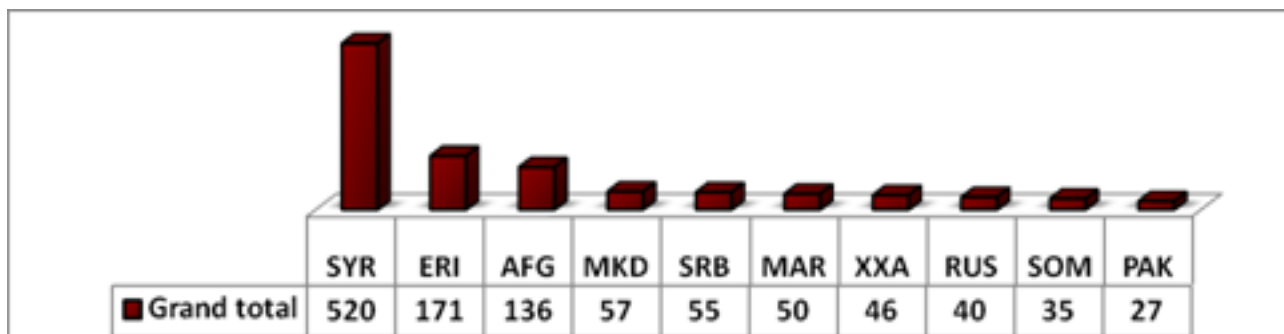
Top 10 nationalities of intercepted irregular migrants



2.2 Germany

The second-ranking participating Member State was Germany with a total of 1606 intercepted irregular migrants, including 520 Syrian, 171 Eritrean, 136 Afghan, 57 FYROM and 55 Serbian nationals, as well as nationals of other third countries.

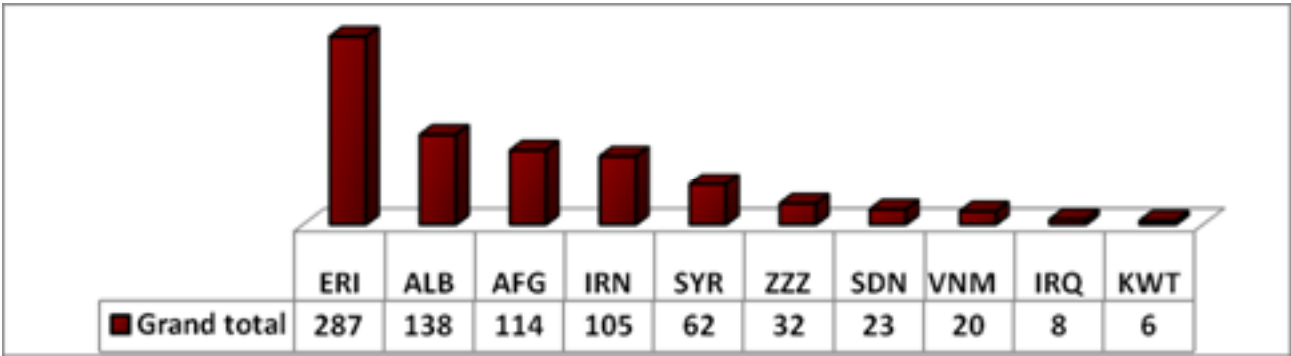
Top 10 nationalities of intercepted irregular migrants



2.3 United Kingdom

The third-ranking participating Member State was the United Kingdom with a total of 825 intercepted irregular migrants, including 287 Eritrean, 138 Albanian, 114 Afghan, 105 Iranian and 62 Syrian nationals, as well as nationals of other third countries.

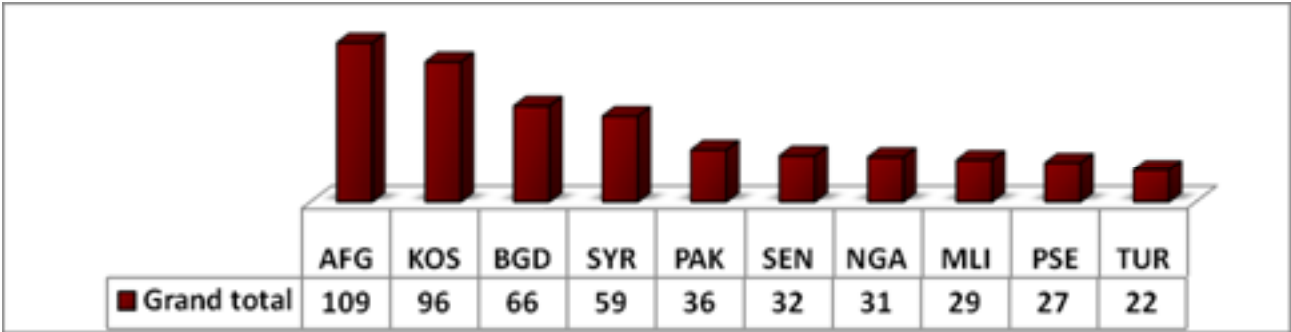
Top 10 nationalities of intercepted irregular migrants



2.4 Hungary

Hungary reported the interception of 694 irregular migrants, including 109 Afghan, 96 Kosovan, 66 Bangladeshi, 59 Syrian and 36 Pakistani nationals, as well as nationals of other third countries.

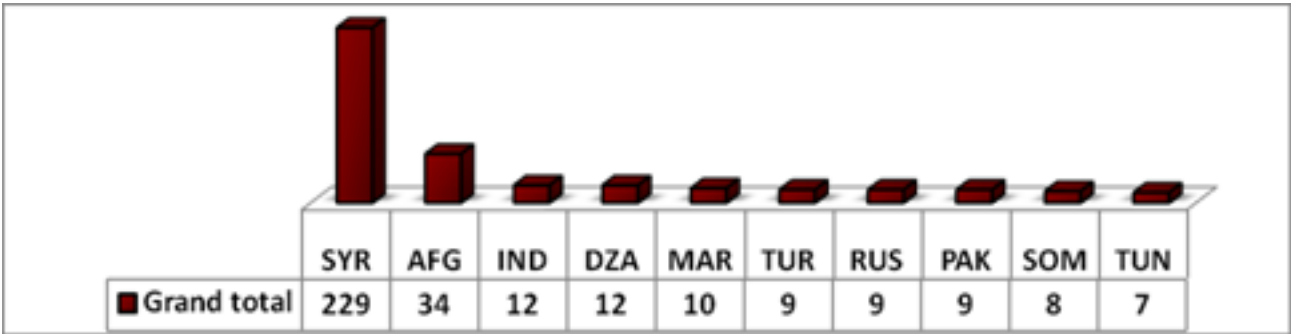
Top 10 nationalities of intercepted irregular migrants



2.5 Austria

Austria reported the interception of 411 irregular migrants, including 229 Syrian, 34 Afghan, 12 Indian, 12 Algerian and 10 Moroccan nationals, as well as nationals of other third countries.

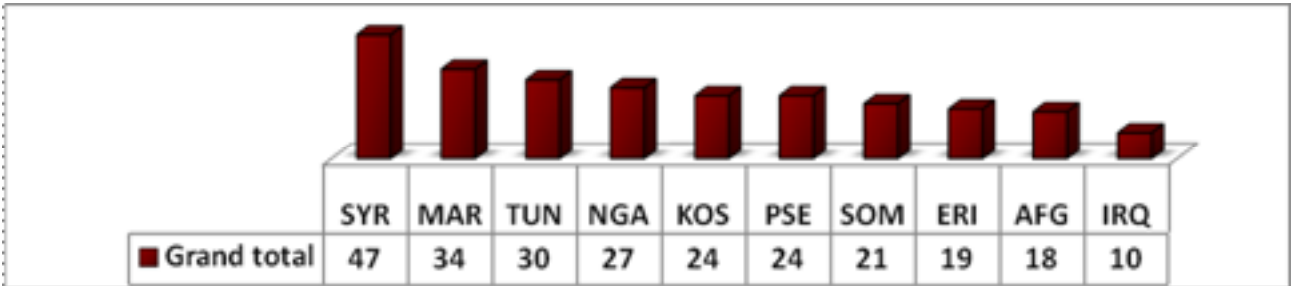
Top 10 nationalities of intercepted irregular migrants



2.6 Switzerland

Switzerland reported the interception of 392 irregular migrants, including 47 Syrian, 34 Moroccan, 30 Tunisian, 27 Nigerian and 24 Kosovan nationals, as well as nationals of other third countries.

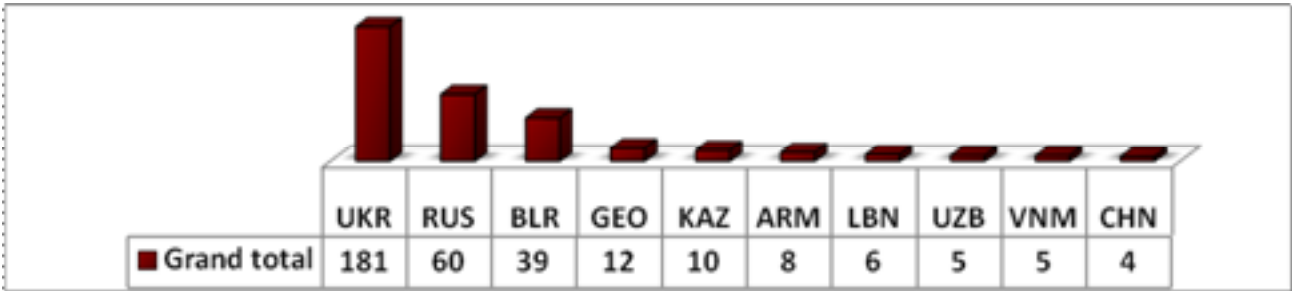
Top 10 nationalities of intercepted irregular migrants



2.7 Poland

Poland reported the interception of 368 irregular migrants, including 181 Ukrainian, 60 Russian, 39 Belarusian, 12 Georgian and 10 Kazakh nationals, as well as nationals of other third countries.

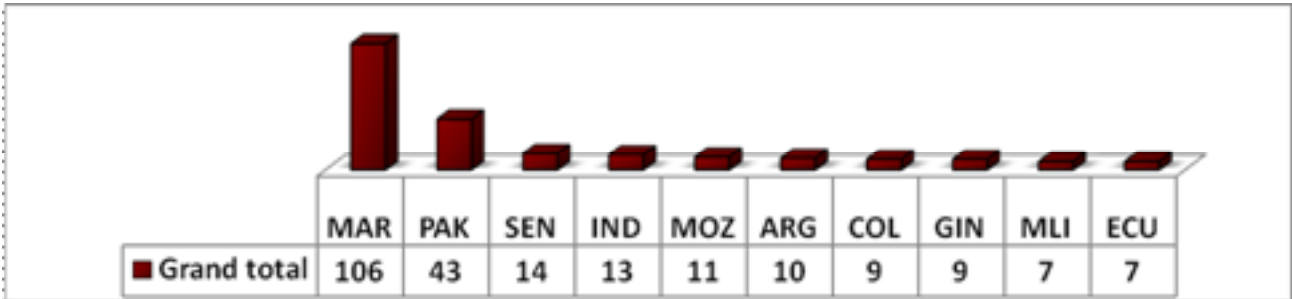
Top 10 nationalities of intercepted irregular migrants



2.8 Spain

Spain reported the interception of 341 irregular migrants, including 106 Moroccan, 43 Pakistani, 14 Senegalese, 13 Indian and 11 Mozambican nationals, as well as nationals of other third countries.

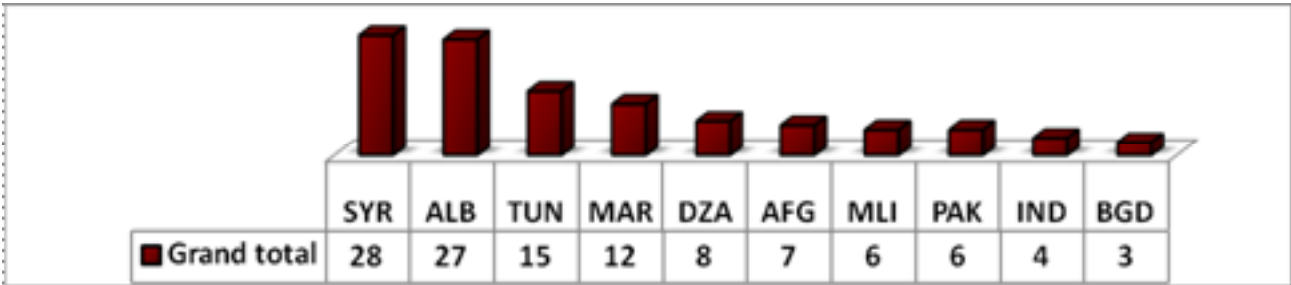
Top 10 nationalities of intercepted irregular migrants



2.9 France

France reported the interception of 154 irregular migrants, including 28 Syrian, 27 Albanian, 15 Tunisian, 12 Moroccan and 8 Algerian nationals, as well as nationals of other third countries.

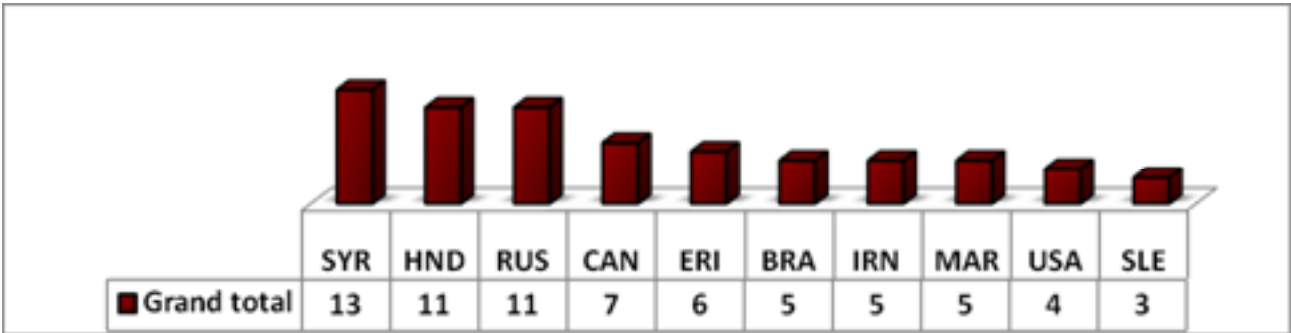
Top 10 nationalities of intercepted irregular migrants



2.10 The Netherlands

The Netherlands reported the interception of 140 irregular migrants, including 13 Syrian, 11 Honduran, 11 Russian, 7 Canadian and 6 Eritrean nationals, as well as nationals of other third countries.

Top 10 nationalities of intercepted irregular migrants



CHAPTER III

1. Final destination countries and routes followed by irregular migrants¹

Data on expected final destination countries as well as routes followed by irregular migrants before interception, or which would have been followed if the interception had not occurred, are mostly based on claims by apprehended irregular migrants, without factual evidence. In addition, it is important to note that out of 9 634² intercepted irregular migrants, 5 921 failed to provide information on their countries of destination or the routes followed. Consequently, the data available yields only 38,54% of the full picture.

1.1 Final destination countries

Analysis of the data on final destination countries, acquired from debriefing intercepted irregular migrants, indicates that the most popular intended final destination was Germany. Sweden, Italy, Switzerland and Spain also ranked among the top destination countries claimed by irregular migrants.

Though the structure of reporting templates kindly provided by the United Kingdom was different from the standard reporting template for Operation PERKŪNAS and did not include an indication of destination countries, nevertheless, bearing in mind that the United Kingdom is the third-ranking participant Member State by the overall number of detected irregular migrants, and taking into consideration the findings of the Joint Police Operation APHRODITE, it is safe to assume that the United Kingdom is among the destination countries most favoured by irregular migrants. The ranking of Ukraine among the TOP 10 destination countries is mainly based on claims by Ukrainian national overstayers detected by Polish border guards leaving Poland.

¹ Routes of entry into the EU are analysed in detail in the Frontex analytical contribution on irregular migration at the EU's external borders (Chapter IV).

² This number does not include data from the United Kingdom.

TOP 10 final destination countries based on statements by irregular migrants

DEU	1078
SWE	498
ITA	348
CHE	286
ESP	265
UKR	169
FRA	127
NOR	121
DNK	115
GBR	94

1.2 Routes and final destination countries of irregular migrants of the main detected nationalities¹

1.2.1 Irregular migrants from Syria: routes and destination countries

The top-ranking intercepted irregular migrants of Syrian nationality named Germany (275 persons or 33,70%), Sweden (338, 41,42%), Denmark (30, 3,68%) and Switzerland (42, 5,15%) as their countries of final destination. 22% of intercepted Syrians gave this information.

¹ For graphics showing routes and destination countries, please see the Annex.

Syrians followed two main routes to gain entry to the EU MS or SAC:

- 1) From Syria irregular migrants travelled to Turkey, from where they proceeded either to Cyprus or Greece, then transited Western Balkan countries, re-entered the EU and continued across EU MS and SAC their route to their destination countries, Germany or Sweden.
- 2) From Syria irregular migrants travelled to Egypt, from where they continued across Italy, France and other EU MS and SAC en route to their destination countries Germany, Sweden or Denmark.

1.2.2 Irregular migrants from Eritrea: routes and destination countries

Intercepted irregular migrants of Eritrean nationality named Italy (176 persons or 42,51%), Germany (66, 15,94%) and the Scandinavian countries (134, 32,37 %) as their countries of final destination. 414, or 39,06%, of intercepted Eritreans gave this information.

From Eritrea irregular migrants travelled either directly to Sudan or initially to Ethiopia and then to Sudan from where they proceeded to Libya, then across the Mediterranean Sea to Italy, and onwards either to France or Germany en route to their destination countries.

1.2.3 Irregular migrants from Afghanistan: routes and destination countries

Intercepted irregular migrants of Afghan nationality named Germany (105 persons or 49,09%), the United Kingdom (12, 5,38 %) and Scandinavian countries (35, 15,69%) as their countries of final destination. 223, or 46,85%, of intercepted Afghans gave this information.

The main route towards the EU MS and SAC followed by Afghans passed through Iran to Turkey from where it divided into three routes:

- 1) either across the external EU land border or across the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece, then in transit through the Western Balkans, followed by re-entry into the EU towards the destination countries Germany or Sweden;

- 2) either across the external EU land border or across the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece, then across the Ionian Sea to Italy then in transit across France to the destination country, the United Kingdom;
- 3) either across the external EU land border or across the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece, then across the Ionian Sea to Italy then in transit across Austria to the destination countries Germany, Sweden or Norway.

1.2.4 Irregular migrants from the Palestinian Territories: routes followed and destination countries

Lack of information on destination countries favoured by irregular migrants originating from the Palestinian Territories makes it rather difficult to identify their possible destinations.

There are four main routes towards the EU MS and SAC followed by irregular migrants originating from the Palestinian:

- 1) from Turkey to Cyprus, Greece then across the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia into Hungary;
- 2) from the Palestinian Territories, taking the sea route to Libya and from there across the Mediterranean to Italy and on to Switzerland;
- 3) from the Palestinian Territories to Syria then by the sea route to Egypt and from there towards Italy and on, presumably, through Austria into Germany.

1.2.5 Irregular migrants from Ukraine: routes and destination countries

The majority of Ukrainian nationals detected by Polish border guards leaving Poland as overstayers claimed Ukraine as their country of destination. However, before being detected when leaving the EU, Ukrainians had stayed in various EU MS and SAC for work reasons.

1.2.6 Irregular migrants from Morocco: routes and destination countries

Intercepted irregular migrants of Moroccan nationality named Spain, Switzerland and Germany as their countries of final destination.

Moroccan nationals indicated two routes towards their countries of destination in the EU MS and SAC:

- 1) from Morocco to Spain then in transit across France to the final destination country Germany;
- 2) from Morocco to Italy by the sea route then across the land border to the destination country Switzerland.

1.2.7 Irregular migrants from Pakistan: routes and destination countries

Intercepted irregular migrants of Pakistani nationality named Germany, Spain and Italy as their destination countries.

The main route towards the EU MS and SAC followed by Pakistanis, like Afghan nationals, passed through Iran to Turkey from where it divided into three routes:

- 1) either across the external EU land border or across the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece then in transit through the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia into Hungary;
- 2) either across the external EU land border or across the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece then across the Ionian Sea to Italy then presumably in transit through Austria to the destination country Germany;
- 3) from Turkey to Cyprus then by sea routes to the final destination countries Italy and Spain.

1.2.8 Irregular migrants from Somalia: routes and destination countries

Intercepted irregular migrants of Somali nationality named Germany, Denmark and the Scandinavian countries as their countries of final destination.

During debriefings Somali nationals indicated two main routes they follow to gain entry to the EU MS and SAC.

- 1) One route passes through neighbouring African countries situated to the North-West of Somalia: Ethiopia, Sudan and Libya. From Libya they try to reach either Greece or Italy by sea routes. From Greece they transit through the Western Balkans to re-enter the EU whereas from Italy they move directly to their countries of destination.

- 2) The second route passes through Turkey, but it remains unclear how Somalis reach Turkey from the African continent. Presumably they attempt to travel via air routes from neighbouring African countries, possibly using falsified travel documents. From Turkey Somalis attempt to travel to Greece by sea from where they transit through the Western Balkans to re-enter the EU to continue to their countries of destination.

CHAPTER IV

The following analytical report has been prepared by Frontex' Risk Analysis Unit, and covers its contribution to Operation PERKŪNAS regarding irregular migration at the EU's external borders.

Irregular migration at the EU's external borders

1. Introduction

Operation PERKŪNAS was organised under the aegis of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The main goal of Operation PERKŪNAS was to identify the link between illegal border crossings at the EU's external borders and irregular migration within the EU and Schengen associated countries focusing on the secondary movement of irregular migrants after entering European Union Member States and Schengen associated countries. All EU Member States and Schengen associated countries except for Croatia, Greece, Iceland, Sweden and the UK participated in the operation and reported their data. The Lithuanian Presidency shared the data gathered during Operation PERKŪNAS with Frontex's Risk Analysis Unit.

The aim of this report is to present the situation concerning irregular migration at the EU's external borders before and during the Operation PERKŪNAS. For the purposes of this report FRAN data from January to September 2013 were taken into account in conjunction with data from the Joint Operations (JOs) Poseidon Land, Poseidon Sea, Aeneas, Hermes, Indalo, and Focal Points Land for the month of September and the first half of October 2013. In addition to this data, data from the European Union Document-Fraud Network (EDF) and PULSAR were also used to compile this report.

The time needed to reach destination countries after illegally crossing the EU's external border is estimated to be from a few weeks up to one year or even longer. Therefore, the number of illegal border crossings from the beginning of 2013 and from the start of Frontex-coordinated JOs in 2013 were taken into account.

2. Irregular Migration

2.1 Irregular Migration Routes

2.1.1 Eastern Mediterranean Route

Over the past few years the Eastern Mediterranean has maintained its status as a hotspot of irregular migration. Detections have followed a remarkably seasonal pattern, invariably peaking in the third quarter of each year and concentrated at the land border between Greece and Turkey.

However, in August 2012, following the implementation of a set of Greek operations (Aspida at the Greek-Turkish land border and Xenios Zeus focusing on illegal stays on the mainland) together with the implementation of Frontex-coordinated Joint Operations (Poseidon Land and Poseidon Sea), by the end of 2012, detections dropped off to almost negligible levels at the Greek-Turkish land border.

In regard to the nationality of irregular migrants recorded in the Eastern Mediterranean, Syrian, Afghan, Palestinian, Somali and Algerian nationals were the top five nationalities.

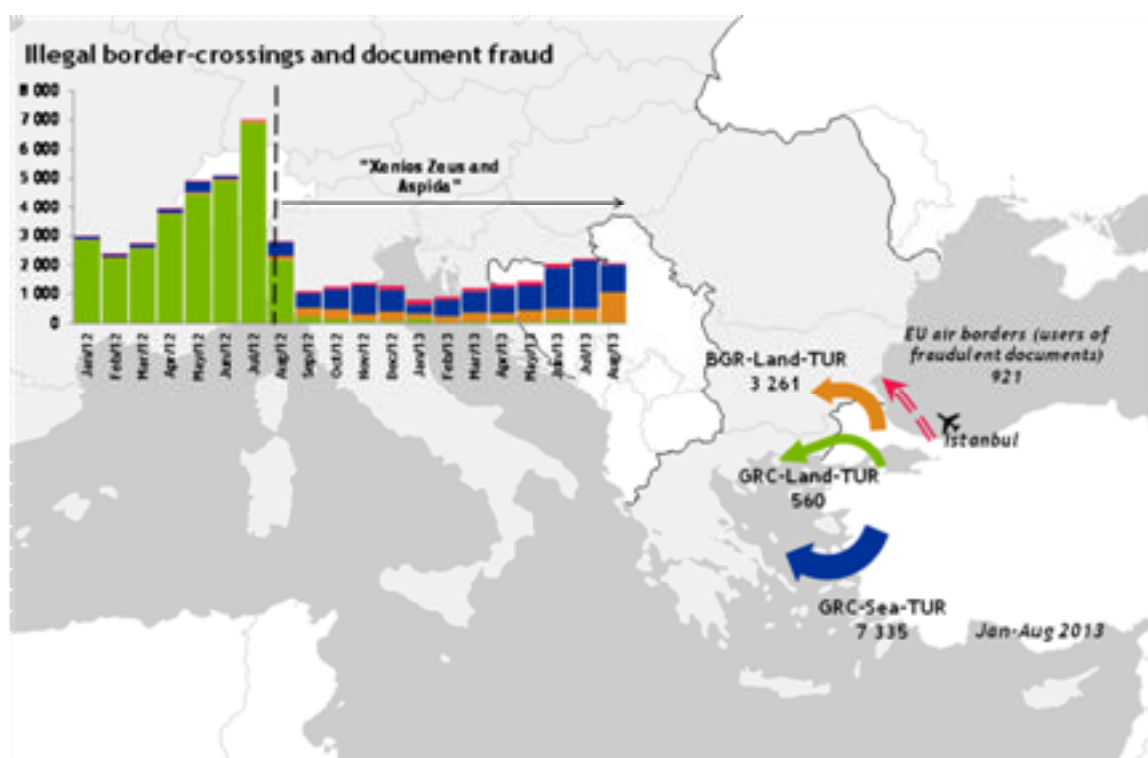


Figure 1: Displacement of irregular migration flow in the Eastern Mediterranean according to the FRAN data.

- **Greek-Turkish land border**

Thus far in 2013, the average monthly number of detected illegal border crossings at the Greek-Turkish land border has been around 50 irregular migrants per month. Prior to crossing the EU's external borders, would-be migrants gather in Istanbul where facilitation networks offer them several options to enter the EU, depending on their financial circumstances: these are the land route across the Evros River to Greece or across the Turkish-Bulgarian land border, and the sea route from the west coast of Turkey to the Greek Eastern Aegean Islands or directly to Italy. In addition, with the use of forged documents migrants may also opt for air routes, usually from Istanbul airport to their selected EU Member States.

The total number of irregular migrants detected at the Greek land border with Turkey from January until the middle of October 2013 was 605, which is substantially lower than the numbers reported during the same period of 2012. The vast majority of the irregular migrants apprehended during 2013 are Syrian nationals followed by Afghanistan, Iraqi, Somali and Iranian nationals.

Before the implementation of operation Aspida in Greece in August 2012, irregular migrants usually crossed the Evros River and often reported themselves to the authorities in Greece, where they were detained. Most of the migrants were released shortly after their apprehension and were issued with an expulsion order, which allowed them to stay in Greece for up to 30 days.

Following the introduction of reinforced operational activities and the extension of the period of detention of irregular migrants in August 2012, a change in the *modus operandi* has been noticed: irregular migrants attempt to cross the border undetected, relying on the services of facilitation networks. The journey is usually arranged in Istanbul, including facilitation on Greek territory from the border to Athens.

- **Bulgarian-Turkish land border**

The reinforced activities at the Greek-Turkish land border have affected the Bulgarian-Turkish land border and have also caused a shift in the migration flow towards Bulgaria. It is worth noting that during the first six months of 2013, the monthly rate of detections increased six fold compared to the same period in 2012.

In Bulgaria, illegal border-crossings take place at the green border and are concentrated in the area of Elhovo. Since the beginning of 2013 the area between BCP Lesovo and BCU Bolyarovo has been particularly affected by irregular migration, which is not covered by the Integrated Border Surveillance System. From 1 January until the middle of October 2013, a total of 5 627 irregular migrants were apprehended along this section of the border. Most apprehensions have been reported from the area of Golyam Dervent and Valcha Polyana villages. Border surveillance at the eastern part of the land border, in particular from BCU Svilengrad to BCU Malko Tarnovo, is difficult because of the rough terrain and poor infrastructure in the area. Most of the irregular migrants claimed to be Syrians, Afghans, Algerians, Palestinians and Iraqis.

- **Greek-Turkish maritime border**

The partial displacement of the irregular migratory flow towards the Greek-Turkish sea border continued during 2013. Figures from the Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) and operational data indicate that more than 8 067 irregular migrants crossed the Greek-Turkish sea border from January until the middle of October 2013. This figure shows an increasing trend on the Greek Eastern Aegean Islands compared to the same period of 2012. In addition, the Greek authorities apprehended 70 facilitators and prevented the crossing of more than 100 migrant boats, which had departed from the Turkish coast. The main nationalities detected during 2013 were Syrian followed by Afghan and to a much lesser extent Somali, Eritrean and Palestinian.

According to operational data collected in the framework of the JO Poseidon Sea in 2012 and thus far during the JO Poseidon Sea 2013, Istanbul and Izmir are Turkey's most frequently-mentioned cities where migrants can find people who arrange trips to Europe. From each city, groups comprising the same nationality or ethnicity are taken by facilitators to the embarkation areas where the network operates. The vast majority of maritime crossings to Greece took place in the Eastern Aegean area close to the Turkish coast and involved the use of rubber boats. Migrants often provoke rescue operations by destroying their boats in order to be rescued by Greek Coast Guard vessels. Another *modus operandi* is when facilitators use speedboats to transfer migrants to the nearest Greek island and then return to Turkey. A number of different islands have been targeted: Agathonisi, Chios, Farmakonisi, Kos, Lesvos, Limnos, Megisti, Rhodes and Samos. Nevertheless, since the beginning of 2013 the most-frequently targeted islands have been Lesvos and Samos.

In addition, in 2013 the Turkish authorities have continued with their surveillance efforts in the Aegean Sea, intercepting migrants usually in rubber boats, before they could reach Greek territorial waters.

Apart from illegal migration, the Eastern Mediterranean Sea region is also affected by smuggling activities, mainly cigarettes and drugs.

2.1.2 Central Mediterranean Route

Since the beginning of 2013 the number of irregular migrants arriving in Italy has increased significantly in comparison to the same period in 2012. In particular, with good weather starting from the end of March, Lampedusa and the east coast of Sicily have frequently been targeted by migrant boats, mainly originating from Libya. From 1 January until the middle of October 2013, at the time this report was drafted, the number of migrants crossing the Central Mediterranean towards Italy reached 30 533 persons. Most of these migrants had departed from Libya, in particular from the coastal areas near Tripoli, Zuwarah and Benghazi. This was followed by departures from Egypt, Turkey and Tunisia as well as departures from Greece across the Ionian Sea. Among the migrants, the predominant nationalities were Eritrean, followed by Somali, Syrian, Egyptian and Nigerian.

Lampedusa was the main targeted area by migration flows, and most of the incidents in that area were SAR operations (78%) far from the island itself. The second main area hit by irregular migration flows was the eastern part of Sicily around Syracuse. These two regions account for around 95% of total detections in Sicily and the Pelagic Islands. On the other hand, the numbers arriving in the region of Apulia, having crossed the Ionian Sea from the west coast of Greece, decreased, but the overall number was compensated for by the increase in arrivals on the Ionian coast of Calabria.

In the Central Mediterranean area, migrants illegally crossing the EU's borders use a wide variety of boats, ranging from small (3–8 m) rubber dinghies up to medium-sized (10–18 m) wooden fishing boats. It is worth noting that migrants detected near Sicily and the southern Italian coast have increasingly mentioned that they had left from Turkey and Syria and had transited through the Greek island of Crete. These boats were mostly navigated by an Egyptian crew which sailed towards the southern coast of Italy. Egyptian facilitators are using Egyptian fishing vessels to carry migrants departing from Egypt, and then collecting more irregular migrants on the high seas close to the island of Crete (Greece). The vessels then continue towards the south-eastern coast of Sicily (Syracuse).



Figure 2: Illustration of the main modus operandi used to transport migrants from the eastern Mediterranean to the central Mediterranean by boat, with transfer points along the route.

2.1.3 Western Mediterranean Route

The role of the Western Mediterranean and the Atlantic region for migration purposes has been low (or secondary) in recent years compared to other sea border areas of the Central or Eastern Mediterranean. From January until the middle of October 2013, less than 2 000 irregular migrants were reported by the Spanish authorities as targeting the southern coast of Spain and only 45 irregular migrants were detected on the Canary Islands. Similar numbers were also reported during the same period of 2012 in both areas. However, together with the interventions reported by the Moroccan authorities with regard to the prevented departures of around 1 000 would-be migrants thus far this year, the trend is increasing slightly, which indicates irregular migratory pressures from Morocco.

At the same time, migration patterns and profiles have been changing. In comparison to 2012, major changes in 2013 are linked to the lower number of Algerian nationals arriving in the area of Almeria and Murcia and the increasing number of Moroccan and sub-Saharan migrants attempting to reach the Spanish coast from Morocco. Algerians, on the other hand, have increasingly attempted to cross the border illegally at major BCPs between Morocco and Spain. Consequently, detections this year have been concentrated close to the area of Gibraltar and the coastal area between Motril, Almeria and the ports of Ceuta, Algeciras and Tarifa where the distance to Spain is the shortest and migrants can undertake the trip without the services of facilitation networks. Sub-Saharan migrants have increasingly been using inflatable toy boats in order to drift into Spanish waters towards Algeciras where they are rescued by the Spanish authorities. During the JO Indalo 2013, the vast majority of cases involved search and rescue operations.

At the sea ports of Ceuta, Tarifa and Algeciras, Moroccan and Algerian migrants constituted the vast majority of irregular migrants apprehended from January to mid-October 2013. Using the cheapest method available, they attempt illegal entry by hiding in vehicles or avoiding border controls by other means. The volume of regular passenger flows, and the number of attempted illegal entries, peak each year at the end of August, in particular during the week before the school year starts in France and Spain.

Migration from Morocco and the Western Sahara to the Canary Islands has been low. There is evidence to suggest that drug smugglers tend to facilitate irregular migrants, in addition to those migrants who organise the journey by themselves towards the Canary Islands. Most irregular migrants are young Moroccan or Sahrawi males seeking part-time jobs on the Canary Islands.

2.1.4 Western Balkan Route

Irregular migration in the Western Balkan region is changing year on year. For example, the region changed from being largely a source area to mostly a transit area in terms of illegal border-crossings in 2012, when 75% of all instances of illegal border crossing detected were of irregular migrants transiting the Western Balkans en route from Greece. This changed in the first half of 2013, with a 43% share of illegal border crossings linked to secondary migration from Greece and 57% to Western Balkan migrants, predominantly migrants from Kosovo¹ and Albania.

Cases of illegal border crossing detected at the Hungarian-Serbian border increased significantly, from 405 in January to a peak of 3 897 irregular migrants in June 2013. Since June, the number of detections has stabilised at around 1 100 per month. From the beginning of January to the end of August 2013, there were 14 633 cases of detection of irregular migrants. This increase was due to the change in the Hungarian asylum law that entered into force in January 2013 following the recommendations of the UNHCR². These changes enabled asylum applicants to stay in open centres rather than in detention centres. From that moment on, migrants detected crossing the border illegally immediately applied for asylum and quickly absconded to continue their journey to other Member States. The news of this change quickly spread among migrants, creating a pull factor that resulted in a massive increase in the number of detections of illegal border crossing at the land border between Hungary and Serbia, followed by asylum applications.

¹ “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”.

² UNHCR: Observations on the situation of asylum-seekers and refugees in Hungary; April 2012.

Virtually all detections were reported from the border section between Hungary and Serbia. In fact, detections of illegal border crossing at the neighbouring sections of border between Romania-Serbia, Hungary-Croatia and Slovenia-Croatia, all decreased to almost negligible levels, indicating the clear motivation of migrants to cross the land border between Hungary and Serbia illegally.

Most detections of illegal border crossing at the Hungarian-Serbian border were reported from the area around BCP Röszke, because it provides the easiest possibility for migrants to continue their journey onwards to Member States along motorways.

During the first quarter of 2013, the Western Balkan route was mostly used for secondary movements of migrants from Asian and African countries who had initially entered the EU illegally from Turkey to Greece. Irregular migrants were apprehended without their identification documents and mostly claimed to be from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Algeria or Bangladesh. Detections of illegal border-crossing associated with such secondary movements increased markedly after the first quarter of 2013, with increasing detections of nationals from Pakistan and Algeria in particular. This flow included persons who had stayed for long periods in Greece, but also, increasingly, persons who had recently arrived in the Greek islands from Turkey and were on their way to other EU Member States. The growth in detections of persons from North and West African regions probably also indicates an increase in the use of flight connections from the countries of origin to Turkey.

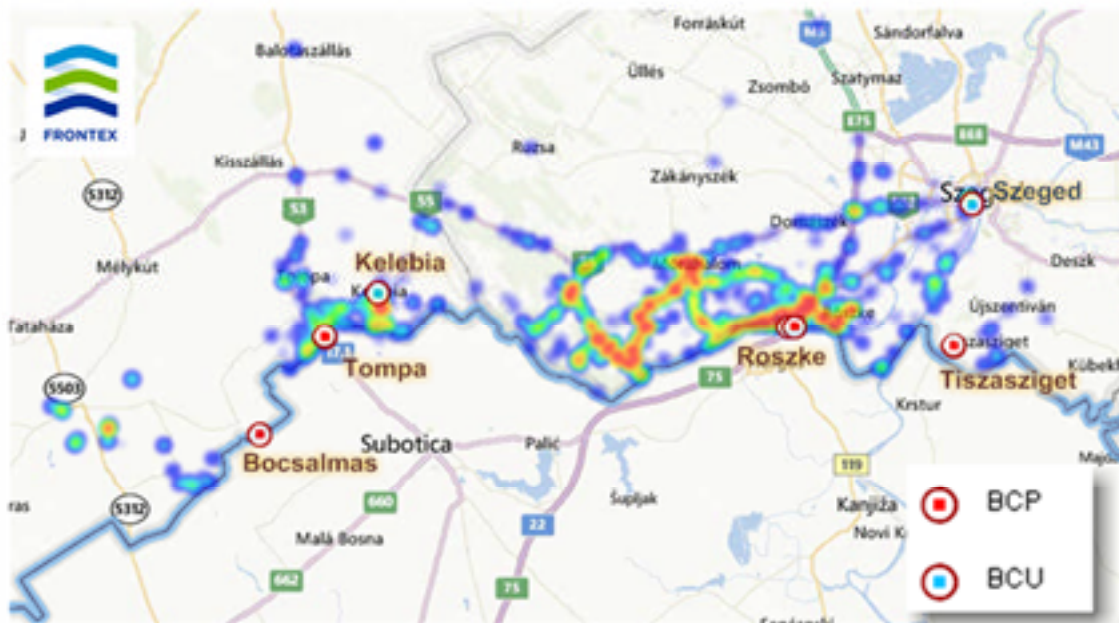


Figure 3: Density of migrants who crossed the Hungarian-Serbian border illegally

The sharpest increase was reported for nationals of Kosovo¹, who were not detected in large numbers before January 2013. According to information gathered in the Joint Operation Focal Points 2013 Land, there is widespread knowledge throughout Kosovo of the relative ease with which the asylum system in Hungary can be abused. Many of them intend to continue onwards to reach other EU Member States. Moreover, the *modus operandi* is fairly simple and apparently also cheap. Migrants travel from Kosovo by public transportation to Serbia and they immediately try to reach Subotica on the border with Hungary. In Subotica, local facilitators and taxi drivers transport the migrants towards the border and they then continue towards Hungary on foot.

In July 2013, the Hungarian authorities took a series of initiatives, including a revision of their asylum law which introduced stricter conditions for asylum applicants to stay in open centres. The impact of this new measures was quick, and information received from the Hungarian authorities and Frontex Joint Operations active at the land border between Hungary and Serbia showed that the number of detections of illegal border crossing fell markedly during the first half of July.

¹ 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.

2.1.5 Eastern Border Route

Illegal border-crossing detections remained low at the Eastern European land borders during the first eight months of 2013. A total of 920 illegal border crossings were recorded during this period; this represents a decrease of 7% compared to the same period of 2012, when 992 illegal border-crossings were reported. On the other hand, these border sections are characterised by a large number of passengers and consequently a large number of refusals at the major border crossing points, especially at the borders of Poland, Slovakia and Hungary with the Ukraine. Refusals of entry often involve document fraud or clandestine entry attempts.

The main threat along these border sections is from irregular migrants using the Eastern European land route, which is composed of several sub-routes from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Asia to Europe. This route is often made up of an air path to Moscow and from there towards the EU or a land route via the Ukraine towards the land borders of Member States, mainly Slovakia. According to UNHCR information, the route for irregular migration from Central Asian countries to Ukraine has increasingly been used during 2013.

The most affected border section for illegal border crossing during the first eight months of 2013 remained the Slovak–Ukrainian land border section with 253 apprehended irregular migrants, representing 28% of the total number of illegal border crossings along the eastern border (29% in 2012). Detections at this border section decreased by 12% compared to the first eight months of 2012, when 288 cases were recorded. The main nationalities apprehended at this border section were nationals of Somalia (46), Georgia (43) and Afghanistan (32). Irregular migrants leaving the asylum centre of Uzhhorod in Ukraine, on their way towards the European Union, were among the most numerous irregular migrants at this border section. The second most affected border section was the Estonian–Russian land border with 199 apprehended irregular migrants, which represents 22% of the total number of detections (2% in 2012). The main nationalities at this border section were Russian (81), Vietnamese (39) and Syrian (7).

As regards the detection of false documents, a high number of detections were reported from BCP Záhony, located at the Hungarian border with the Ukraine. This BCP is the main transit point used by Ukrainian migrants travelling to work in Italy, via Austria. Most of the migrants were detected during exit checks on their way home.

In contrast to the low number of illegal border crossings, there is a high risk of abuse of legal channels, in particular the abuse of asylum procedures by migrants from the Russian Federation, Georgia and other Caucasus countries at the Polish-Belarusian border. During the first eight months of 2013, more than 11 000 migrants from the Russian Federation applied for asylum at BCP Terespol, four times more than in the same period of 2012.

Russian nationals have become the largest group of asylum seekers, and 95% of them claim to be of Chechen ethnicity. They arrive at the external borders of the EU from almost all areas of Chechnya and no specific place of origin can be identified. The vast majority travel in groups, as a family unit with 2-4 children, and usually carry many pieces of luggage with all their belongings. They hold brand-new passports, issued 5 to 30 days before their arrival in Poland. The main destination countries for Russian asylum seekers are Germany and Austria, where they apply for asylum again.

2.2 Air borders

The migratory situation at the air borders develops dynamically and is driven by many factors. However, the abuse of transit regulations and asylum procedures and the use of document fraud are persistent at the air borders. Migratory pressure usually concentrates at airports which have direct connections to third countries of migration or airports of major destination countries targeted by certain groups of migrants. The large existing diasporas in the EU, labour opportunities or social benefits provided to migrants, and particularly the acceptance rate of asylum applications, usually act as pull factors and make a MS a target for migrants.

In relation to refusals of entry, the total number in the first eight months of 2013 was 28 964; the top refused nationalities were Albanian (1 911), Brazilian (1 729), United States (1 504), Algerian (1 226) and Russian (1 181). The main airports reporting refusals were Paris (CDG), London (LHR), Madrid (MAD), Rome (FCO) and Frankfurt (FRA). The top nationalities refused entry in the EU are almost all refused due to insufficient resources (Brazilians) or lack of documentation confirming the purpose and conditions of their stay (Albanians, Russians and Algerians); these migrants are coming to the EU to seek better living conditions. The exception is nationals from the United States, who are almost all refused in the United Kingdom due to a lack of work permits. The trend remains stable and is almost at the same level as in 2012, with an average of 800 refusals per week.

As regards statistics, the number of asylum claims in the first eight months of 2013 at the EU's air borders was 15 570; the top 5 nationalities were Syrian (4 431), Eritrean (1 313), Egyptian (1 101), Iranian (980) and Somali (767). The main airports affected were, in descending order; Stockholm (ARN), London (LHR), Frankfurt (FRA), Vienna (VIE) and Rome (FCO). The number of asylum claims has increased since 2012, when the number of asylum applications in the same period was 7 994.

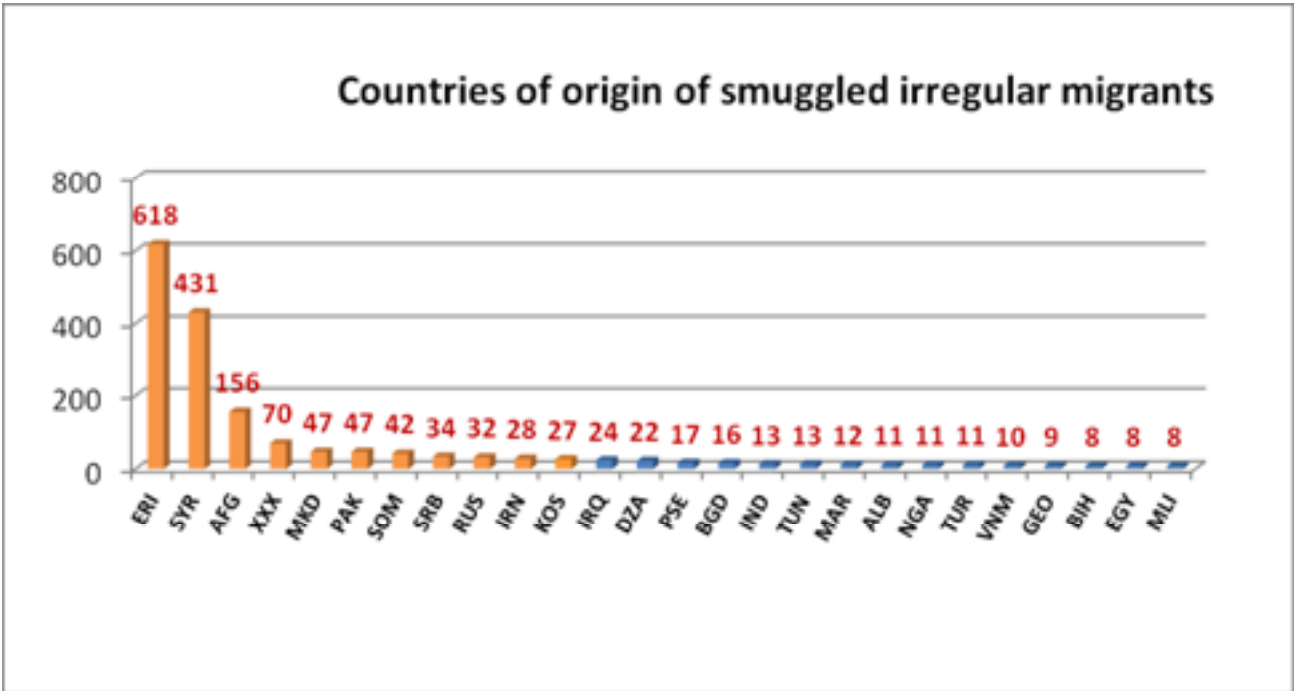
Travel document abuse, including passports, visas, identity cards, residence permits and travel documents issued to non-nationals, is on the rise in the European Union. Pulsar data indicates that there has been an increase in the detection of document abuse in EU entry checks, primarily in regard to passports and visas. Turkish Airlines is the airline mostly linked to document abuse, followed by Aeroflot, Alitalia, Royal Air Maroc and Egyptair.

Passport fraud is the most frequently detected form of document abuse at the EU's air borders; impersonation using genuine documents is increasing, primarily involving Syrian nationals. Examining the countries of issuance of passports which were used for attempted illegal entry, the most frequently-reported passports have been from France, Sweden, Mali, the United Kingdom and Turkey.

CHAPTER V¹

1. Indications of smuggling of irregular migrants

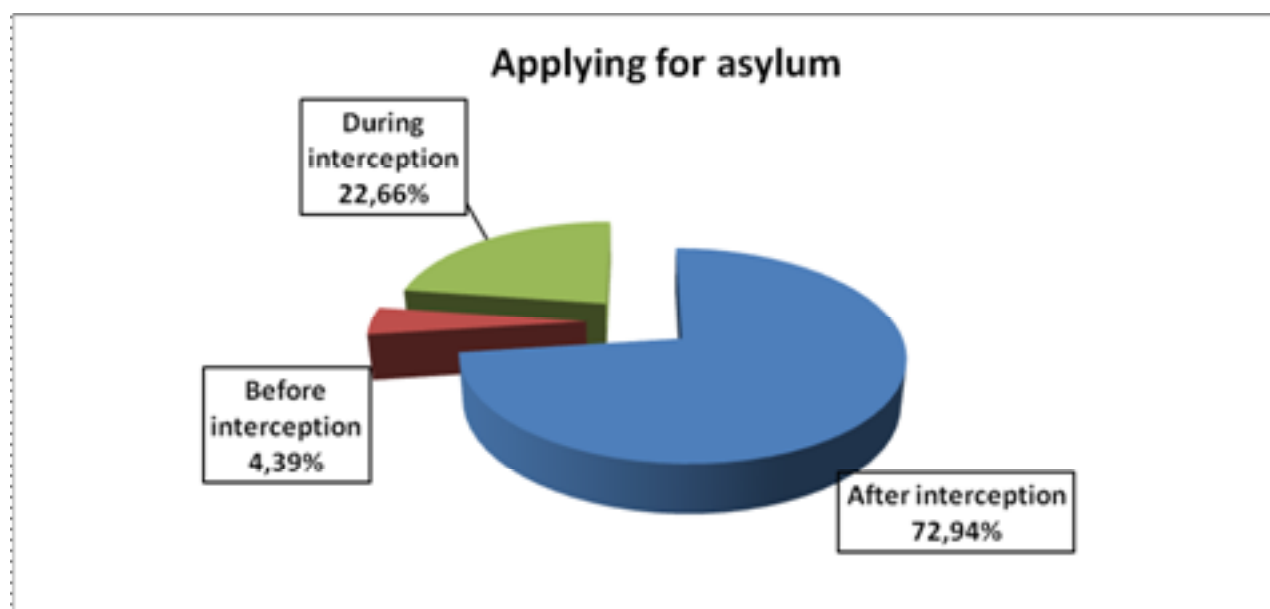
During Operation PERKŪNAS, there were indications of 1 780 irregular migrants having been smuggled into or across the territories of participating Member States, which amounts to 18.5 % of the total number of intercepted irregular migrants. These indications are based on statements by the intercepted irregular migrants. Eritreans, Syrians and Afghans were identified as the top three nationalities of smuggled irregular migrants.



¹ This chapter does not include any data from the United Kingdom.

2. Asylum seekers

Out of the total of 9 634 interceptions, 6 601 third country nationals (68.52%) applied for international protection. The largest proportion (4 815) submitted their applications after interception, while 1 496 third country nationals submitted their applications during interception. 290 detected third country nationals had applied for asylum before interception. The latter category included cases where an intercepted asylum applicant had already applied for asylum before in other Member States; this category relates to a potential Dublin procedure. This category also included detections of asylum seekers who had absconded from Asylum Centres located on the territory of detecting Member States and were intercepted repeatedly on the territory of the same Member State, while moving towards a neighbouring Member State.



The five top-ranking nationalities of asylum seekers were as follows: Syrian, Eritrean, Afghan, Palestinian and Gambian.

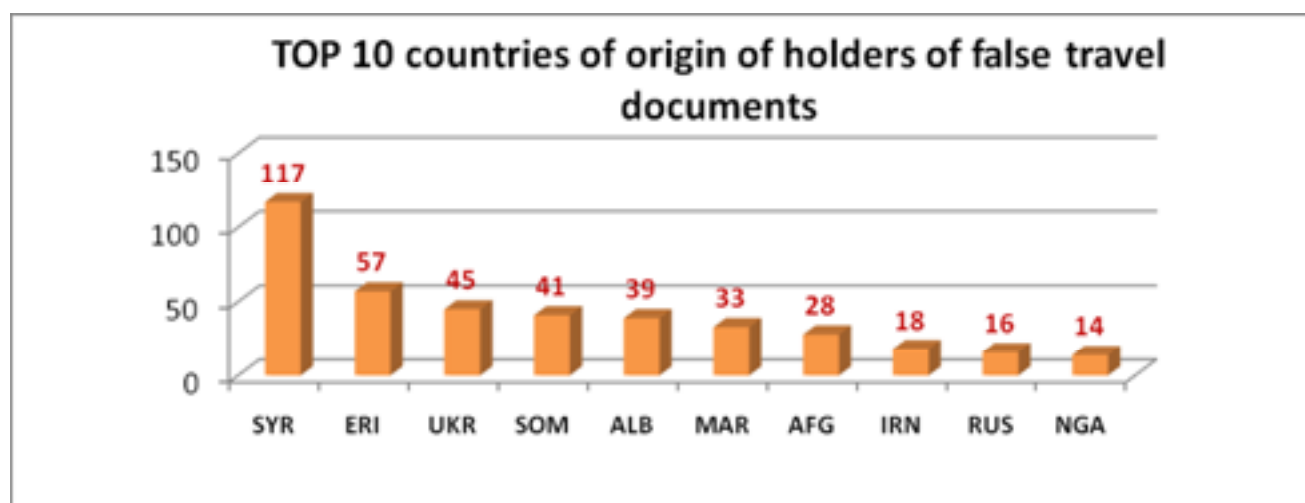
The data in the table below show the five top-ranking nationalities of asylum seekers broken down by the timing of their asylum application in relation to their interception.

TOP 5 countries of origin of asylum seekers

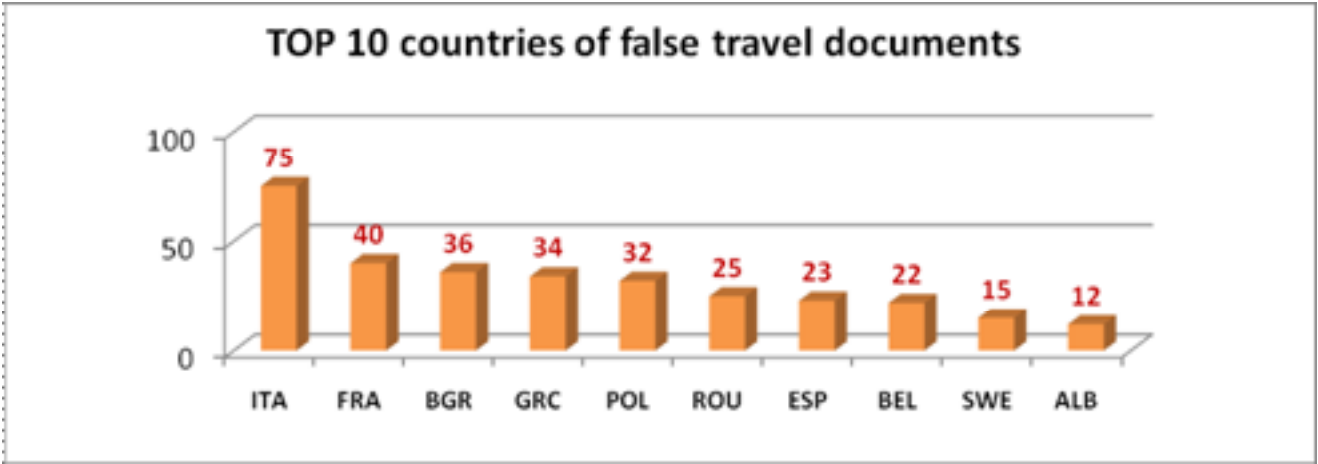
Applied for asylum BEFORE interception		Applied for asylum DURING interception		Applied for asylum AFTER interception	
SYR	59	SYR	320	SYR	2744
AFG	28	AFG	170	ERI	835
RUS	31	ERI	131	PSE	241
PAK	25	BGD	71	GMB	152
GEO	11	KOS	53	AFG	114

3. False travel documents

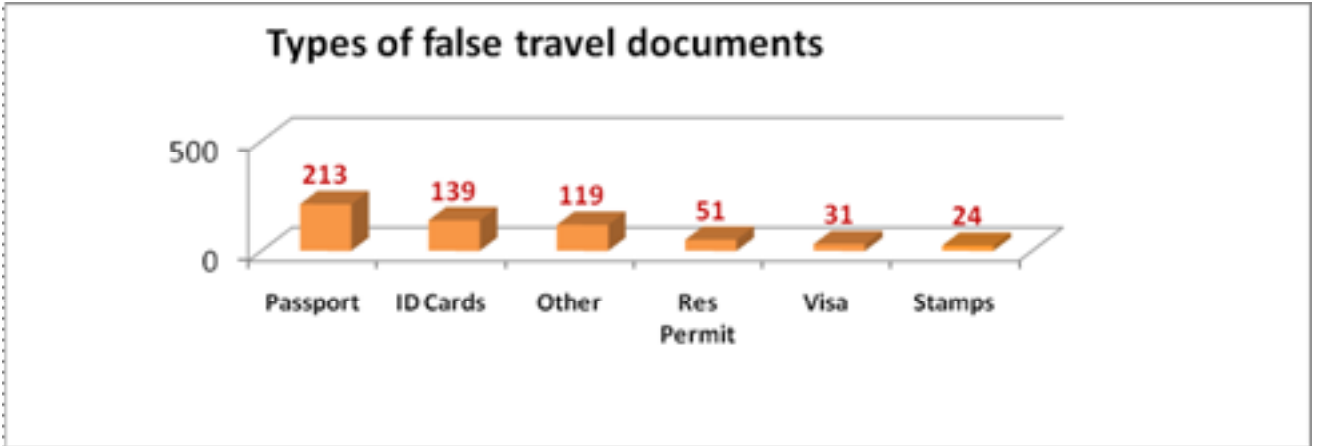
The total number of intercepted irregular migrants who used false travel documents or were involved in imposture cases was 577. The top 10 nationalities of intercepted irregular migrants using false documents or apprehended because of involvement in cases of imposture were: Syrians (117), Eritreans (57), Ukrainians (45), Somalis (41), Albanians (39), Moroccans (33), Afghans (28), Iranians (18), Russians (16) and Nigerians (14).



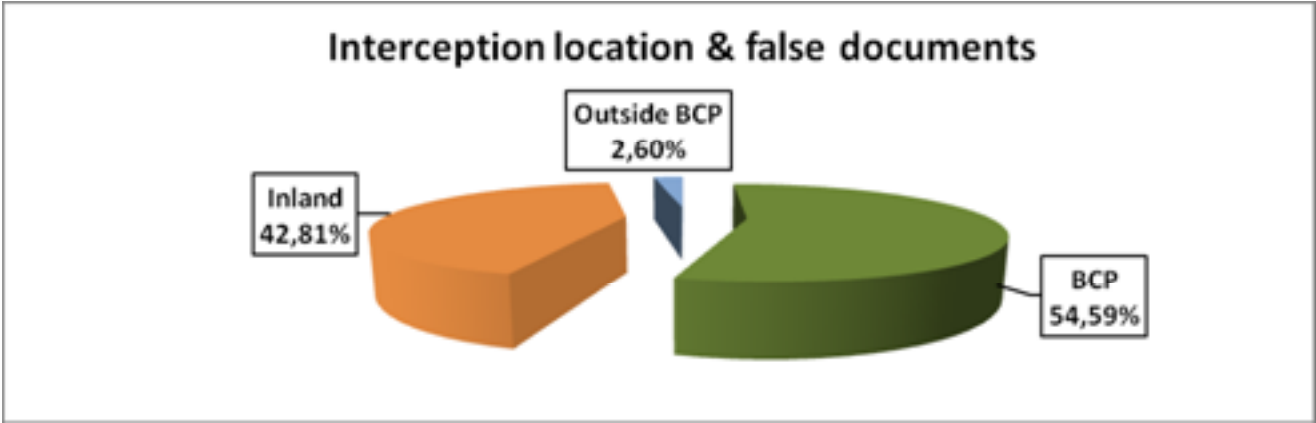
The following table illustrates the top 10 nationalities of false travel documents used. The proportion of Italian falsified travel documents used is by far the largest.



It should also be noted that different types of false travel documents were used, such as passports, ID cards, residence permits and visas, as well as falsified stamps.

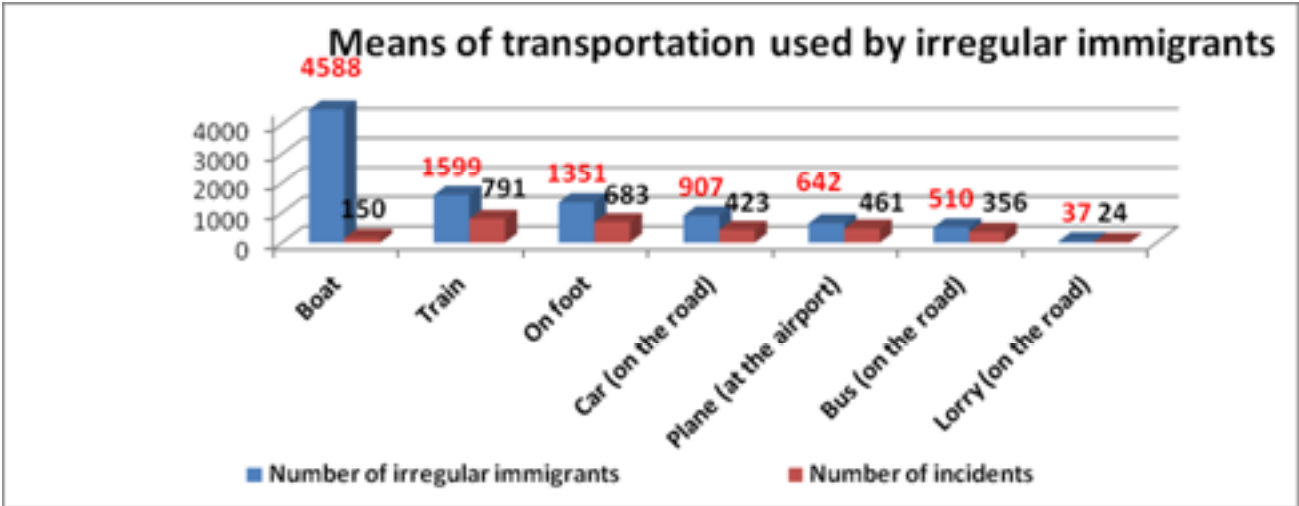


The largest proportion of irregular migrants, those attempting to gain entry with false travel documents, were detected at border crossing points; the second-largest proportion consisted of those intercepted on the territory of participating Member States. A low number of false travel document users were detected along the border between border crossing points, which is natural, since false documents are not usually carried by those attempting to cross the border surreptitiously.



4. Means of transportation

Various types of transportation were used by irregular migrants to gain entry into the EU MS and SAC. The vast majority of intercepted irregular migrants used ships or boats to arrive in the territory of the EU MS and SAC. Trains were also used to gain entry to or travel through the participating Member States. Cars and planes accounted for a smaller proportion of the means of transportation used by irregular migrants.



5. Costs of irregular travel

In accordance with the reporting indicators of Operation PERKŪNAS, intercepted irregular migrants were asked what amount of money they had spent to cover their travel costs, including illegal facilitation. Based on statements by those irregular migrants who gave this information, the largest amounts were spent by Bangladeshi nationals, equalling 11 900 EUR. The lowest amount in the top ten for irregular travel costs, broken down by nationality, was paid by Iranian nationals, equalling 3 799 EUR.

1 983 EUR is the statistical average amount spent by one person for irregular travel to Europe.

TOP 10 costs of illegal travel to EU

MS/SAC per person (average) in EUR

BGD	11900
ALG	6150
IND	5950
LKA	5100
PAK	4804
AFG	4485
GIN	4130
TUR	4100
VNM	3950
IRN	3799

CHAPTER VI

1. Evaluation and conclusions of the operation

1.1 Degree to which the aims and objectives of the Operation PERKŪNAS were achieved

It can be concluded that the aims and objectives of the operation were very largely achieved. The participation was extensive, involving 23 Member States of the European Union and 2 Schengen Associated Countries. The phases of preparation and implementation went smoothly and in an excellent spirit.

The involvement of Frontex was very valuable throughout the operation and during the procedure for evaluating the results.

1.2 Conclusions on irregular migration at the EU's external borders

(written by Frontex Risk Analysis Unit)

- The reinforced activities at the Greek-Turkish land border and within Greece itself have caused an increase in illegal border crossings at the Bulgarian-Turkish land border during 2013. At the same time, a partial displacement from the Greek-Turkish land border to the Greek-Turkish sea border, which started in the second half of 2012, continued in 2013.
- Currently the Central Mediterranean route is the most important route for illegal border crossing at the European Union's external borders, being targeted by boats departing from Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Syria and Greece. Any changes in terms of increase and decrease have a significant impact on the overall picture of irregular migration towards European Union Member States. Consequently, any activities targeting illegal border crossings and focused only in this area have an important influence on the overall number of irregular migrants illegally entering the European Union.

- For the first time since the beginning of Frontex coordinated activities at the EU's external borders, the number of irregular migrants apprehended during the summer months of 2013 at the Hungarian-Serbian land border was almost equivalent to the number of irregular migrants apprehended in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea.
- Measures undertaken to target irregular migration at a specific border section usually push would-be migrants to use other routes and/or postpone the illegal border crossing to a time when it will be more convenient to enter the EU illegally.
- Secondary migration of irregular migrants has an important impact on the number of illegal border crossings at the European Union's external borders with Western Balkan countries, and on the movement of irregular migrants across the internal borders of European Union Member States.
- The abuse of asylum procedures at the EU's eastern borders, more specifically at BCP Terespol at the Polish-Belarusian border, became one of the significant modus operandi used for irregular migration towards the EU during the first eight months of 2013. Migrants from the Russian Federation often claim to be Chechens and use BCP Terespol as the EU entry point, continuing to Germany, Austria and France.
- Asylum claims at European Union airports have almost doubled to date in 2013, compared to the same period in 2012. The significant increase in Syrian nationals applying for asylum was one of the main reasons for the marked increase in asylum applications at the EU's air borders.

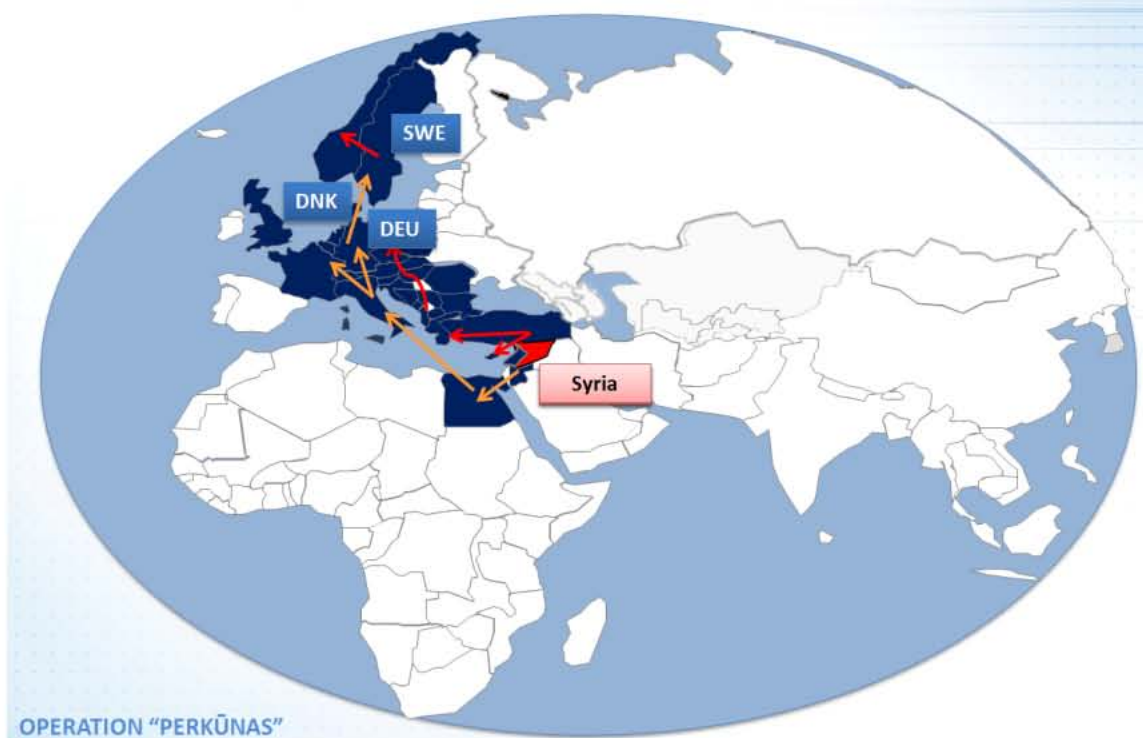
1.3 Overall conclusions

- The overall number of detected irregular migrants, considering the timeframe of the operation, is comparatively very great. It has increased compared to the number of detected irregular migrants during the same period in 2012. It clearly shows the considerably increased flows of irregular immigration towards the EU and within the territory of EU MS and SAC. Significantly increasing flows of Syrian irregular migration due to events in Syria are the main reason for the overall increasing trend of irregular migration towards and within the EU MS and SAC.
- Though the biggest number of irregular migrants was detected at the EU external borders, inland detections comprise a significant proportion of detections (40,04%) as well, which indicates the need for systematic monitoring of irregular secondary movements within the EU MS and SAC.
- Based on statements by detected irregular migrants, Germany, Sweden and Italy have been identified as the main destination countries. However, bearing in mind that the United Kingdom is the third-ranking participating Member State by the overall number of detected irregular migrants, and taking into consideration the findings of the Joint Police Operation APHRODITE, it is safe to presume that the United Kingdom is also among the destination countries most attractive to irregular migrants.
- Based on debriefings of detected irregular migrants, many of them, once they have entered the EU, manage to reach the desired final destination countries. Therefore it can be concluded that systematic collection of information on secondary movements within the EU MS and SAC might serve as a reference for specific targeted law enforcement compensatory measures against irregular secondary movements within the EU MS and SAC.
- Considering that the largest proportion (72,94%) of irregular migrants submitted applications for international protection after interception, this could be assessed as a definite quantitative indication of abuse of asylum procedure.

- Boats are the most frequently-used means of transportation to enter the EU across external borders, in particular by Syrian and Eritrean nationals. However trains, which are the second-ranking means of transportation, are intensively used by Syrians, Eritreans and Afghans for irregular secondary movement inland. This finding could serve as a specific reference for the law enforcement authorities responsible for targeted compensatory measures on the territories of the EU MS and SAC.
- Analysis of routes, means of transportation and main nationalities involved in irregular migration towards and within the EU MS and SAC, even given the relatively short timeframe of data collection, indicates a clear link between illegal crossing of the EU external borders and further irregular secondary movements across the territories of EU MS and SAC countries.

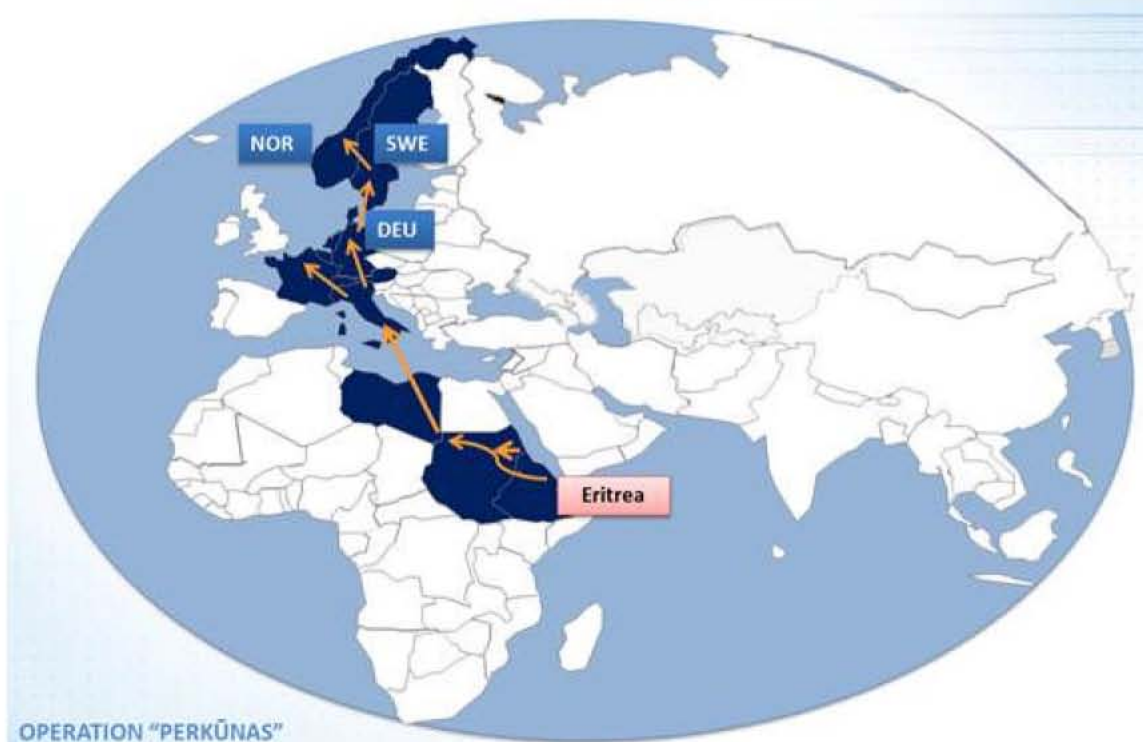
TARGET FINAL DESTINATIONS & ROUTES FOLLOWED BY INTERCEPTED
IRREGULAR IMMIGRANTS OF **SYRIAN** NATIONALITY

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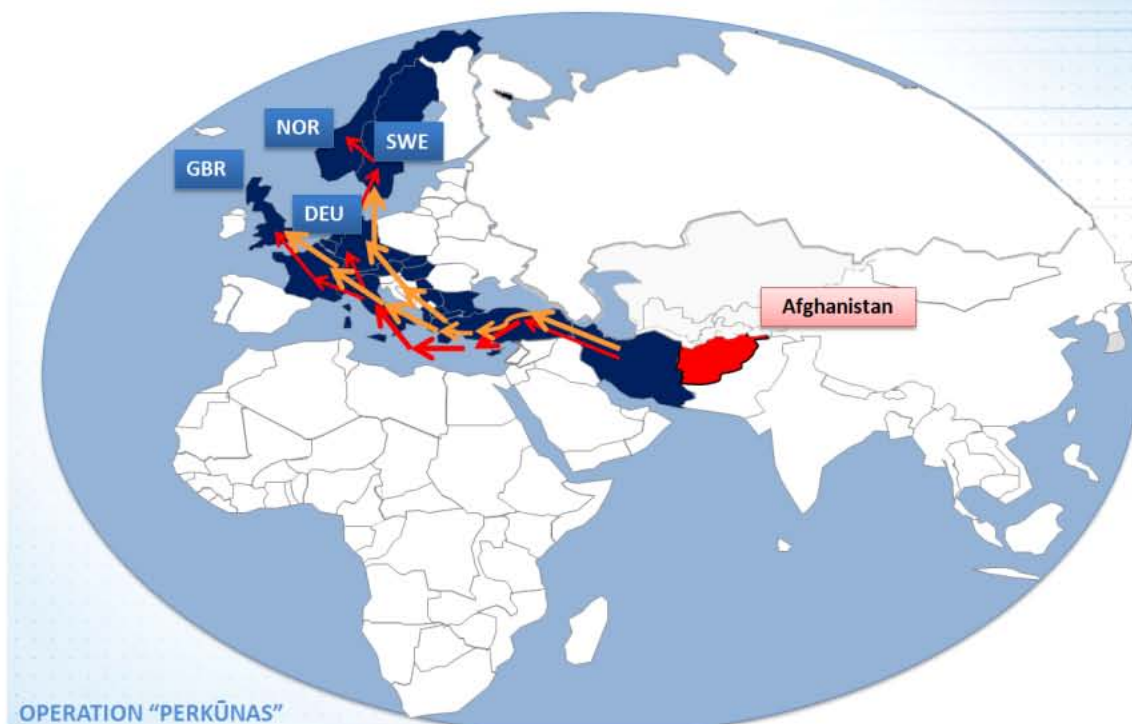
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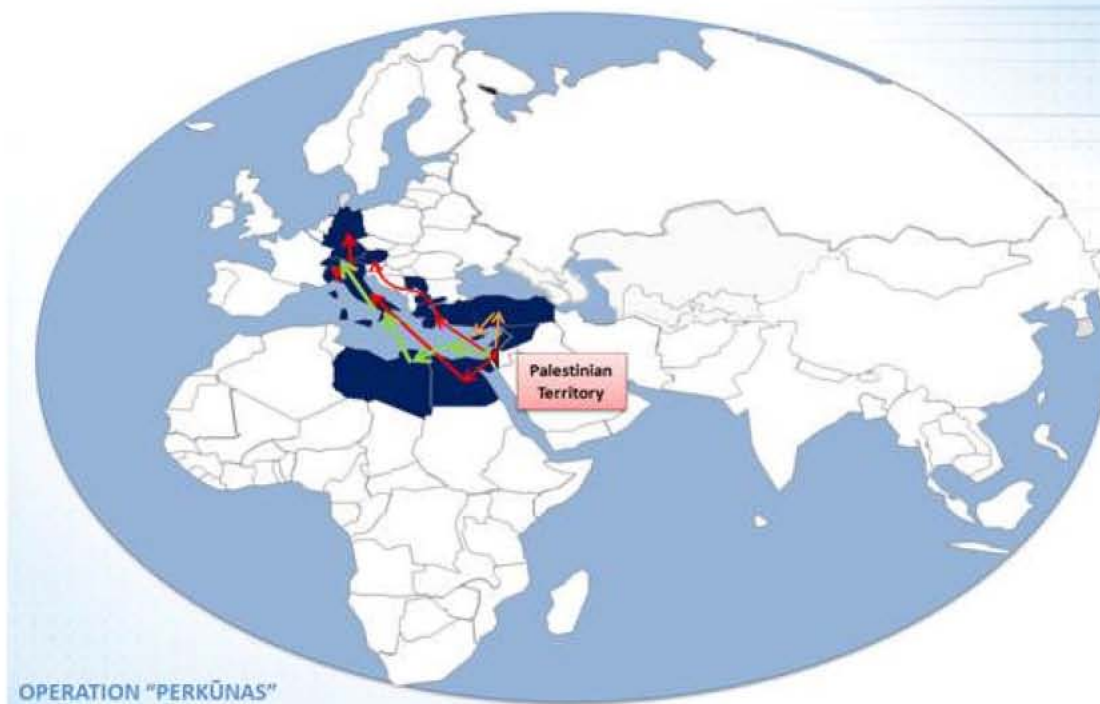
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IRREGULAR IMMIGRANTS OF **AFGHAN** NATIONALITY

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TARGET FINAL DESTINATIONS & ROUTES FOLLOWED BY INTERCEPTED
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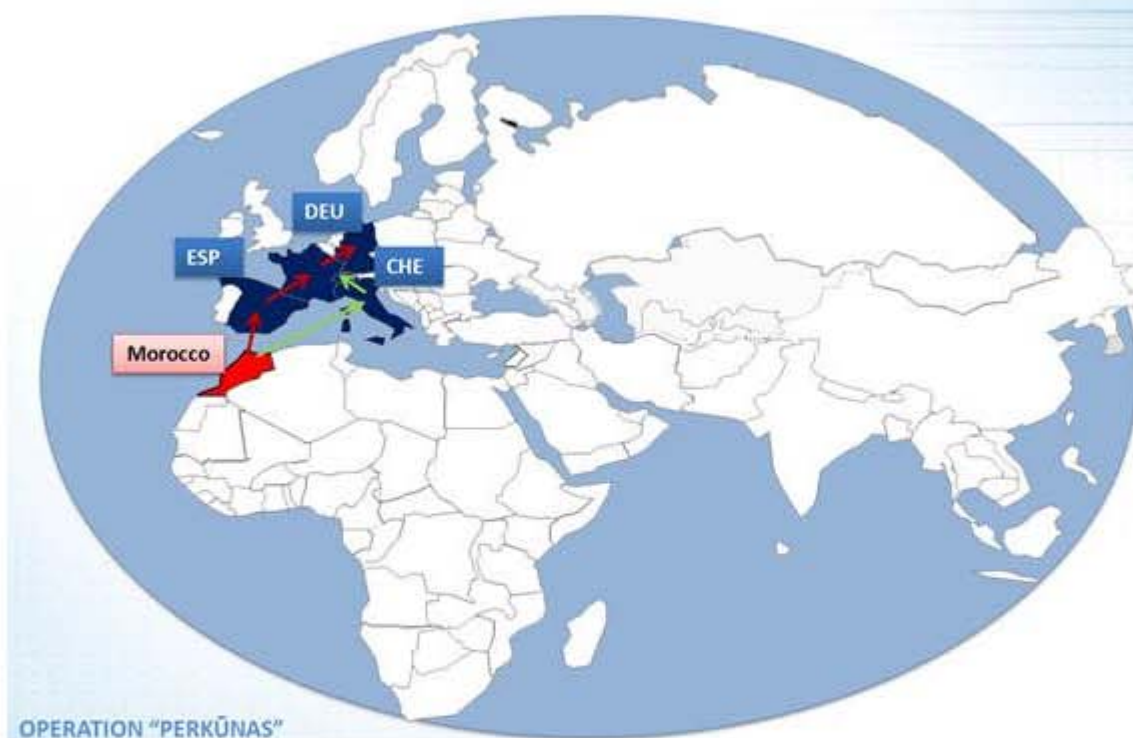
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TARGET FINAL DESTINATIONS & ROUTES FOLLOWED BY INTERCEPTED
IRREGULAR IMMIGRANTS OF **PAKISTANI** NATIONALITY

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TARGET FINAL DESTINATIONS & ROUTES FOLLOWED BY
INTERCEPTED IRREGULAR IMMIGRANTS OF **SOMALI** NATIONALITY

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