
BALKAN COUNTRIES COOPERATE FOR BETTER MIGRATION CONTROL

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The EU will provide Bosnia with 1.5 million euros to manage the steadily growing numbers of migrants seeking asylum in the country.

About 5,500 migrants have entered Bosnia this year. The demographics vary from young families to young men seeking opportunities for education and work, according to AFP. Many of the migrants come from Pakistan and Iran.

"The number of refugees and migrants arriving in Bosnia-Herzegovina has increased and we must act swiftly," EU aid commissioner Christos Stylianides said.

Migration is on the rise in other western Balkan countries as well. Balkan Insight reports that from January to the end of May, authorities in Bosnia, Montenegro, and Albania recorded more than 6,700 new migrants and asylum seekers, more than double the 2,600 people registered in the three countries during all of 2017.

These countries lay off the main Balkan migration routes that carried more than 1 million asylum seekers to Germany in 2015-2016 and now lack the border fences and beefed-up security countries such as Serbia, Hungary, and Slovenia installed.

Albanian authorities say they caught 2,311 migrants in the first five months of this year, up from just 162 in January-May 2017 and more than double the figure of about 1,000 for the whole of last year, Reuters reports.

Security and human-rights ministers from a half-dozen Balkan countries and Austria agreed this week to create a joint migration database and develop cooperation, according to Balkan Insight.

"The situation is under control, but it is time for joint activities to ensure that everything [stays] under control. The trend is negative," said Bostjan Sefic, state secretary at Slovenias interior ministry.

Bosnian officials this spring said a new migration route had opened running from Greece through Albania, Montenegro, and Bosnia.

Although irregular border crossings into the EU were 44 percent lower year on year from January through March, the fall was largely noted on the Central Mediterranean route, the EU border agency Frontex reports. Numbers were up on both the Western and Eastern Mediterranean routes, although the flow on the latter route is a trickle compared to the peak in 2015 and 2016.

<https://www.tol.org/client/article/27778-bosnia-migration-migrants-refugees-balkans.html>

Kaynak/Source: