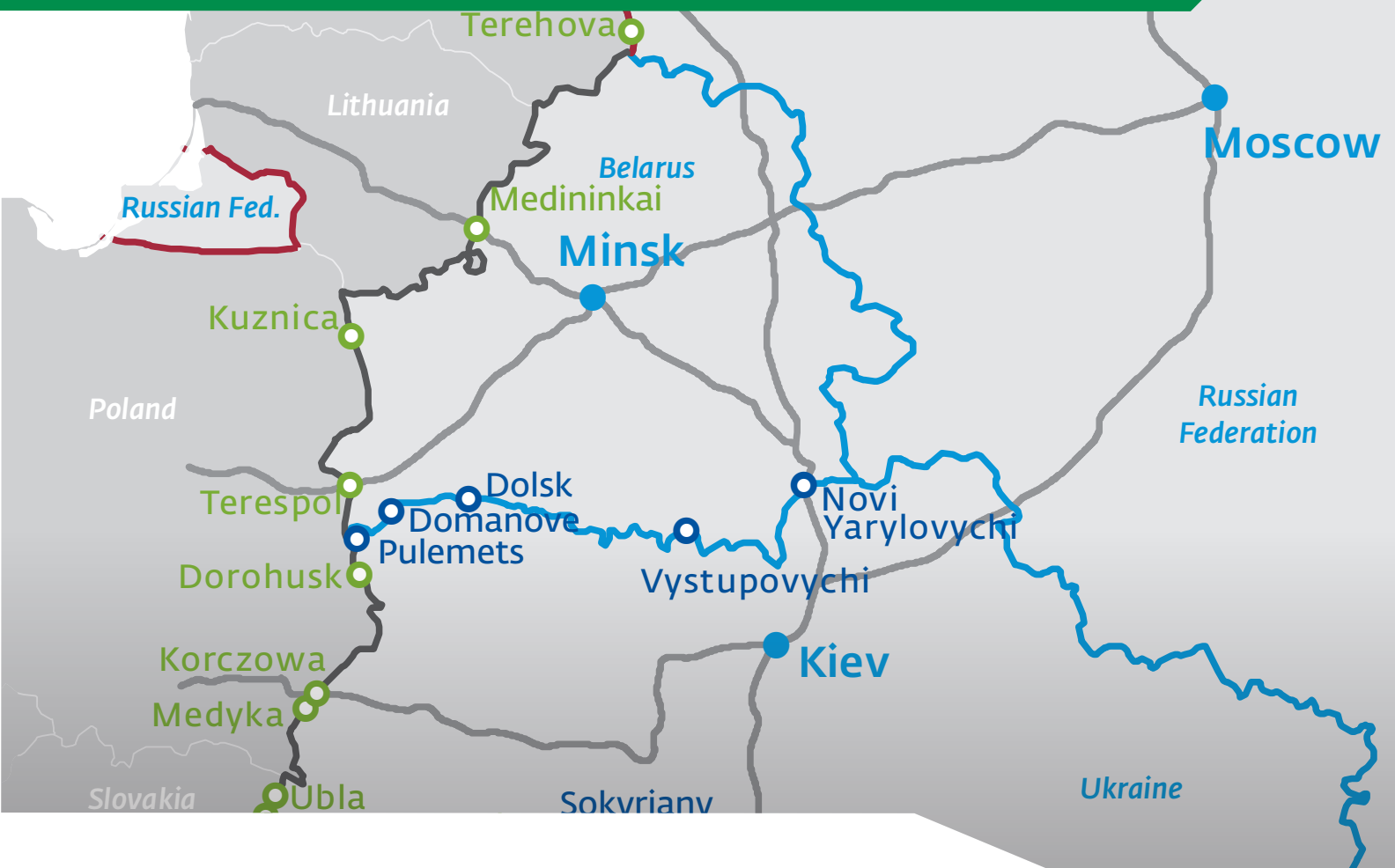


Eastern European Borders Annual Risk Analysis 2014





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Frontex official publications fall into four main categories: risk analysis, training, operations and research, each marked with a distinct graphic identifier. Risk analysis publications bear a triangular symbol formed by an arrow drawing a triangle, with a dot at the centre. Metaphorically, the arrow represents the cyclical nature of risk analysis processes and its orientation towards an appropriate operational response. The triangle is a symbol of ideal proportions and knowledge, reflecting the pursuit of factual exactness, truth and exhaustive analysis. The dot at the centre represents the intelligence factor and the focal point where information from diverse sources converges to be processed, systematised and shared as analytical products. Thus, Frontex risk analysis is meant to be at the centre and to form a reliable basis for its operational activities.



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List of abbreviations used

ABC	Automated Border Control
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
API	Advance Passenger Information
ARA	Annual Risk Analysis
BCP	border-crossing point
CIRAM	Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
EBC	Eastern Borders Conference
EB-RAN	Eastern European Borders Risk Analysis Network
EC	European Commission
EDF	European Union Document-Fraud
EDF-RAN	European Union Document-Fraud Risk Analysis Network
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
EU	European Union
EUR	euro
Eurodac	European dactyloscopy
Europol	European Police Office
Eurostat	Statistical Office of European Communities
FRAN	Frontex Risk Analysis Network
Frontex	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IDPs	internally displaced persons
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JO	Joint Operation
LBTA	local border traffic agreement
LBT	local border traffic
n.a.	not applicable
Q/Qtr	quarter of the year
RFI	Request for Information
RTP	Registered Traveller Programme
RUB	Russian rouble
SAC	Schengen Associated Countries
SIS	Schengen Information System
UK	United Kingdom
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VIN	Vehicle Identification Number

Executive summary

In 2013, border security at the borders between Member States and Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and the Russian Federation was shaped by several interlinked factors.

Firstly, overall regular passenger flow continued to grow in 2013, by roughly 10% from 2012. The growth was driven by expanding legal travel channels – growing visa issuance and implementation of local border traffic agreements – as well as longer-term economic developments in Eastern European Borders Risk Analysis Network (EB-RAN) countries and the Russian Federation encouraging mobility of people and goods. Growing regular traffic has generated considerable pressure on border-crossing points' (BCPs) capacity to keep the traffic both smooth and secure. In addition to development of infrastructure, Border Guard authorities are searching for new innovative solutions for border checks technology, logistics and processes. Although the growth of traffic can be expected to be modest in 2014, these efforts should be further encouraged, as long-term factors for the growth in traffic remain valid.

Secondly and somewhat connected to regular passenger flows, the smuggling of excise and illicit goods remained a major threat to border security. Data collected within the EB-RAN, as well as during Frontex-coordinated Joint Operations, indicate that the smuggling of tobacco products was particularly common. Smuggling occurred primarily through official BCPs; however, a variety of *modi operandi* were also detected at green borders (between BCPs) varying from the so-called 'ant smuggling' through the BCPs to the use of rafts at the border rivers to smuggle large amounts of cigarettes across common borders.* Additionally, cross-border criminal activities also

included attempts to smuggle stolen vehicles and motorbikes from the EU to EB-RAN countries. Smuggling of illicit drugs range from cannabis and synthetic drugs transiting/originating in the EU and smuggled towards EB-RAN countries to heroin and precursors of amphetamines smuggled to the EU.

Thirdly, there were more irregular movements of people across the common borders in 2013. However, the trends as regards *modi operandi* and origin of irregular migrants were quite varied.

In 2013 detections of illegal border-crossing remained low (1 316) in comparison with other sections of the EU's external borders: only 1.2% of all illegal border-crossings reported by Member States at the external borders were reported from the 6 000-kilometre-long eastern borders of the EU. Arguably this is because migrants taking the route via EB-RAN countries or the Russian Federation to the EU, especially non-regional migrants, face (a) logistic difficulties and high costs; (b) efficiently cooperating border-control authorities on both sides of the common borders; and therefore (c) high risk of detection. Although 'push factors' in origin countries of irregular migrants, such as Afghanistan, would point to a growing threat of illegal border-crossing, the magnitude of the threat will most likely be limited in a wider EU perspective.

In contrast to the rather low level of threat as regards illegal border-crossing, the issue of migrants refused entry and then applying for asylum and absconding from reception centres can be assessed as the most serious at common borders in 2013 in terms of magnitude. The number of refusals of entry rose

* For definition of common and regional borders see general map of the EB-RAN region in Figure 3, page 12.



to over 50 000, i.e. 39% of the EU total, indicating a growing risk of abuse of legal travel channels. While the large number of refusals of entry can be partly explained by growth in regular traffic, two individual phenomena stood out in 2013:

1. A sharp increase in nationals of the Russian Federation of Chechen origin refused entry and then using asylum applications in Poland as a way to enter the EU and move further on to Germany.
2. The continued flow of Georgian nationals to Poland and further on to other Member States using a variety of *modus operandi*.

The main entry point in both cases was the Polish-Belarusian border.

While not attracting media attention and not putting the lives of migrants at risk, the use of this *modus operandi* appears to be a significant entry channel of irregular migration to the EU. It exploits possibilities for legal entry while still absorbing an important part of the resources at the border.

The abuse of visas in order to work irregularly and/or overstay in other Member States than that stated in the visa was also reported, including continued use of fraudulent supporting documentation and falsified stamps to conceal the fact of overstaying.

As the abuse of visas, asylum system and other means of legal entry touches responsibilities of many authorities, the risks should be mitigated by searching for solutions from all four tiers of border security: measures implemented by third countries, cooperation agreements, border checks and measures within the area of free movement.

The situation in Ukraine is the main uncertainty considering the outlook on border security. So far, at the common borders with the EU, the impact of the crisis has remained limited. However, continued political and economic pressure in Ukraine does make stabilisation of the situation hard to achieve. Population movements from the contested areas, especially Crimea and Eastern Ukraine are possible. On the other hand, economic and political instability may cause changes in labour migration, thus possibly also impacting irregular movements.

Despite the existing risks in border security, there are also important positive developments in sight: the implementation of the EU-Moldova visa liberalisation in April 2014 can be regarded as a major sign of enhanced border security and cooperation in the region, which makes it possible to promote regular cross-border mobility without compromising border security.

1. Introduction and methodology

The European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex) created a concept of the Eastern Borders Conference (EBC) in August 2008. The EBC was designed as a regular activity/forum where specific challenges related to irregular migration at the eastern borders of the EU could be addressed by FRAN (Frontex Risk Analysis Network) representatives and the relevant neighbouring third countries.

By 2009 Frontex had signed working arrangements with Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Moldova and Belarus. Subsequently, Frontex proposed to set up a permanent Eastern European Borders Risk Analysis Network (EB-RAN), to be comprised of the competent border-control authorities from the mentioned four countries and the Risk Analysis Unit of Frontex. Additional arrangements were later signed allowing for the establishment of regular information exchange and joint analytical activities: with Moldova in March 2009 (Cooperation Plan), with Ukraine in November 2010 (Mechanism on information exchange for risk analysis cooperation) and with Belarus in November 2010 (Memorandum on regular exchange information and joint analytical activities). Importantly, the Russian Federation opted to stay out of the EB-RAN.*

1.1. Data collection and additional information

In order to facilitate the exchange of information between the EB-RAN countries and Frontex, the Commission and Frontex set up a secure Internet platform on the European Commission's CIRCABC server, similarly to

what is available for the FRAN. This platform is used exclusively by EB-RAN countries and the Frontex Risk Analysis Unit.

EB-RAN statistical data from Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine are available for the period 2010–2013. The core of the overview are the EB-RAN and monthly statistical data of neighbouring FRAN members: Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania (only common borders, or borders with the Russian Federation) covering the year 2013. There are five key indicators of irregular migration: (1) detections of illegal border-crossing, (2) detections of facilitators, (3) detections of illegal stay, (4) refusals of entry; and (5) asylum applications. The last indicator used in previous reports (detections of false documents) is now covered by the EDF-RAN (European Union Document-Fraud Risk Analysis Network) with its statistical templates.

The 2014 Annual Risk Analysis will follow the notion of risk as defined by the updated Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model, introduced in 2011.

EB-RAN countries – Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine – were addressed, prior to the expert meeting of 1 April 2014, with a Request for Information (RFI) covering the defined main risks in accordance to CIRAM methodology. Answers were received from all EB-RAN countries.

Other sources include, in particular, bimonthly analytical reports from Member States, FRAN Quarterly, Tailored Risk Analyses produced in 2013 and Frontex reporting from different Joint Operations coordinated by Frontex.

* Even though the Russian Federation has opted to stay out of the Eastern European Borders Risk Analysis Network and does not contribute to its work, this report continues to cover external land borders of Member States with the Russian Federation with data only reported by Member States and Schengen Associated countries.



Open sources of information such as reports issued by government agencies, EU institutions and international or non-governmental organisations were also used.

1.2. Quality of available data

Consistent with other law-enforcement indicators, variation in administrative data related to border control depends on several factors. In this case, the number of detections of illegal border-crossing and refusals of entry are both functions of the amount of effort spent detecting migrants and the flow of irregular migrants. For example, increased detections of illegal border-crossing might be due to an actual increase in the flow of irregular migrants, or they may in fact be an outcome of more resources made available to detect migrants. In exceptional cases, an influx of resources may produce an increase in reported detections while effectively masking the actual decrease in the flow of migrants, resulting from a strong deterrent effect.

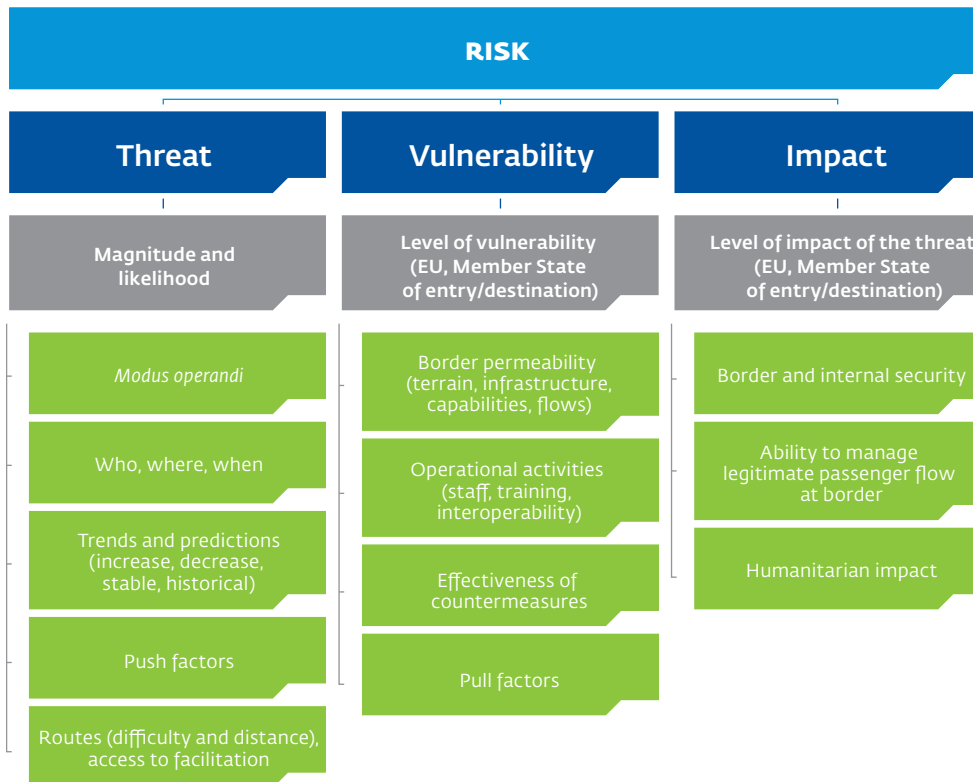
Similar issues should be taken into account regarding the number of detections of cross-border crime at the borders. Higher numbers of detections at a particular BCP might indicate a surge in criminality, but may also be the result of more efficient border control and/or the presence of specialists whose expertise in a certain area (the identification of stolen vehicles, for instance) may increase the number of detections. The statistical data used for this analysis should not be considered as official statistics but as management of information to support the planning of joint operational activities. The data might therefore occasionally vary from data published officially by national authorities. The use of slightly adapted FRAN monthly statistical templates by EB-RAN countries created some compatibility issues between the FRAN and EB-RAN data sets. In particular, reasons for refusals of en-

try (Indicator 4) are standardised for FRAN members, but vary among EB-RAN members in line with their national legislations. Detections of illegal border-crossing at BCPs (Indicator 1B), as reported by EB-RAN countries, should also be analysed with caution since they may also include figures for persons using forged documents (Indicator 6). It should also be taken into consideration that figures for illegal stay (Indicator 3) refer only to detections at the border on exit of persons overstaying in a particular country. Considering some of the neighbouring Member States, the indicator on asylum applications does not have a clear link with common borders (especially Hungary, Finland and Norway) as most asylum seekers arrive in these countries using other routes. Considering reporting on detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs, it should be noted that the growth of detections in Estonian data in 2013 is for the most part due to changes in reporting and not in the actual detections.

1.3. Application of the Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM)

A key development in the CIRAM update released in 2011 is the adoption of a management approach to risk analysis that defines risk as a function of threat, vulnerability and impact. Such an approach endeavours to emphasise risk analysis as a key tool in ensuring the optimal allocation of resources within constraints of budget, staff and the efficiency of equipment. According to the model, a 'threat' is a force or pressure acting upon the external borders that is characterised by both its magnitude and likelihood; 'vulnerability' is defined as the capacity of a system to mitigate the threat; and 'impact' is determined as the potential consequences of the threat. In this way, the structured and systematic breakdown of risk is presented in the risk assessment and conclusions chapters.

Figure 1. Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM)





2. Situation at the common borders – the context

Table 1. Summary of FRAN, EB-RAN* and selected Member States** indicators for 2013

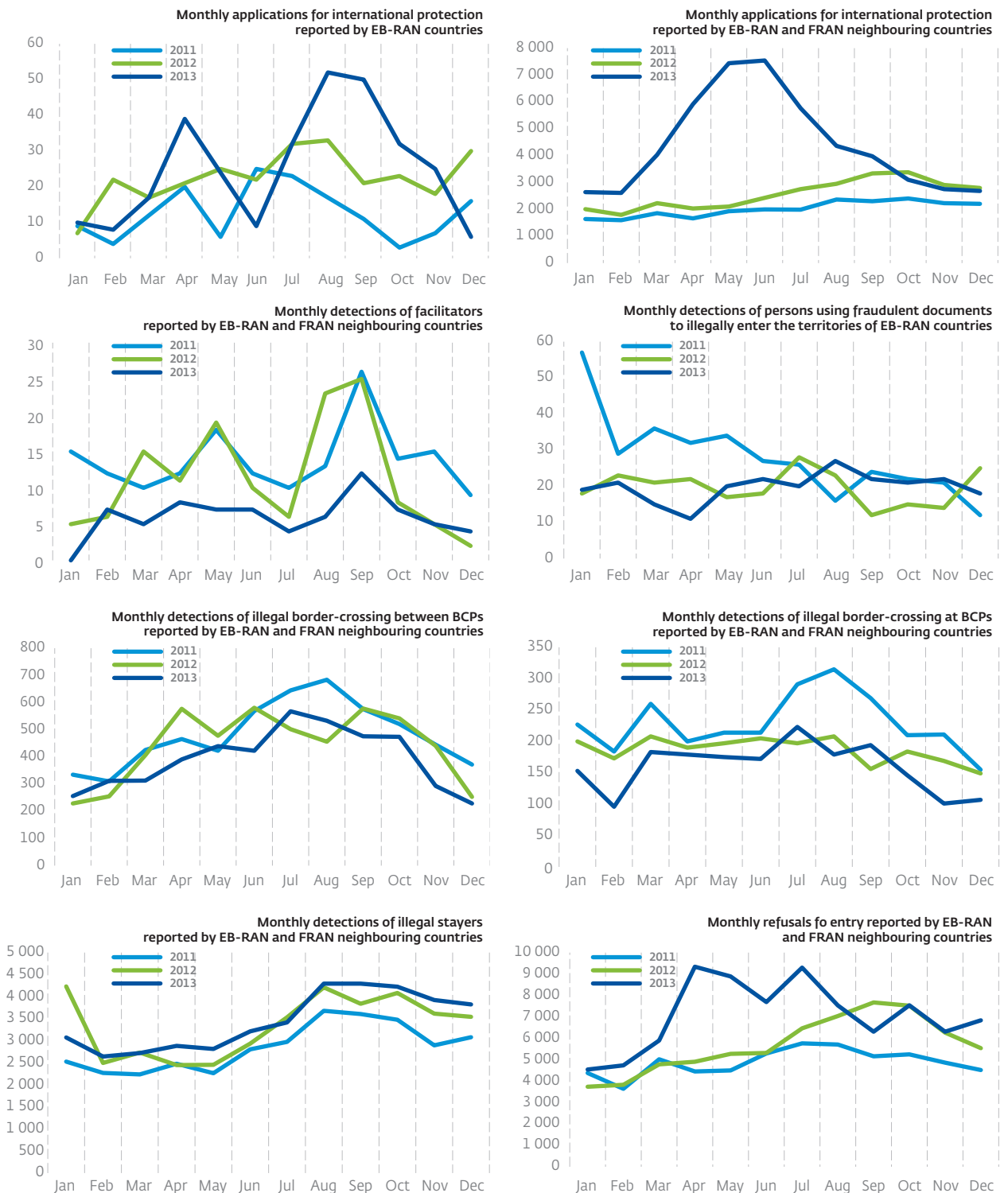
Indicator	EU Totals	Member States (eastern land borders only)		EB-RAN
			% of EU total	
Illegal border-crossing between BCPs	107 365	1 316	1.2%	3 392
Clandestine entries	599	6	1.0%	11
Facilitators	6 902	39	0.6%	33
Illegal stay	344 888	8 360	2.4%	32 979
Refusals of entry	129 232	50 356	39%	34 573
Applications for asylum	353 991	52 534	15%	304
False travel documents	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	238
Return decision issued	224 305	33 831	15%	n.a.
Effective returns	161 320	24 580	15%	n.a.

* 2013 data from Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine

** Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania

Source: FRAN data as of 18 March 2014

Figure 2. EB-RAN and FRAN indicators – common borders



Source: EB-RAN and FRAN data as of 18 February 2013



Figure 3. **General map of the Eastern European Borders**

Note on definitions: in the text 'common borders' refers both to borders between Member States and EB-RAN countries (covered by both sides) and borders of Member States/Schengen Associated Countries with the Russian Federation (covered only by the EU/SAC side of the border)



2.1. Border controls

Regular passenger flows

The total number of border-crossings (both entry and exit) in regular cross-border traffic at the common borders including the border with the Russian Federation reached approximately 77 million in 2013, roughly a 10% increase from 2012.* Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine reported additional 54 million border-crossings at their borders with regional neighbours.

Depending on the border section, the main reasons for growth include the following factors: (a) increased visa issuance by Member States; (b) implementation of local border traffic agreements (LBTA); and (c) overall growth of shopping-related cross-border travel by both EU and EB-RAN country and Russian nationals.

The Polish-Ukrainian border section remained the busiest in terms of border-crossings with roughly 16.7 million border-crossings (+11% compared to 2012) followed by Finland-Russian Federation with 12.9 million border-crossings (+8%). The sharpest growth of traffic was reported at Poland's border with the Russian Federation's Kaliningrad region, with a 52% growth from roughly 4 to 6 million border-crossings. The growth at this border section may be explained by increased visa issuance and especially the implementation of the local border traffic agreement in July 2012. The number of border-crossings (entry and exit) by citizens of the Russian Federation with local border traffic (LBT) permits increased from 27 000 in 2012 to 1.15 million in 2013. As reported by Polish border authorities the level of traffic is very high especially at weekends, pointing to shopping- and tourism-related travel.

At the regional borders the busiest border section was the Ukrainian-Russian border with 28.2 million border-crossings.

Both common and regional borders have some distinctive seasonal trends resulting from labour migration and tourism. Peaks during the holiday seasons and at weekends create considerable pressure on the capacity of the BCPs, which requires an optimal use of resources in order to avoid undue waiting times for bona fide travellers.

Composition of regular passenger flows

From the EU Member State point of view citizens enjoying free movement are subject to minimum checks, while third-country nationals, whether they require visas or not, are subject to more thorough checks, as defined by the Schengen Borders Code. Hence the composition and extent of passenger flow determine, to a large extent, the allocation of resources for border checks.

Data on composition of the regular traffic was not available from all border sections, but generally the share of non-EU citizens remained clearly higher than that of EU-citizens, ranging from almost 90% at the Polish-Belarusian border to roughly 60% at the Latvian-Russian border. Even at the Slovakian-Ukrainian border – which was the only border section recording a decrease in the number of border-crossings – the number of non-EU citizens grew both in absolute and relative terms.

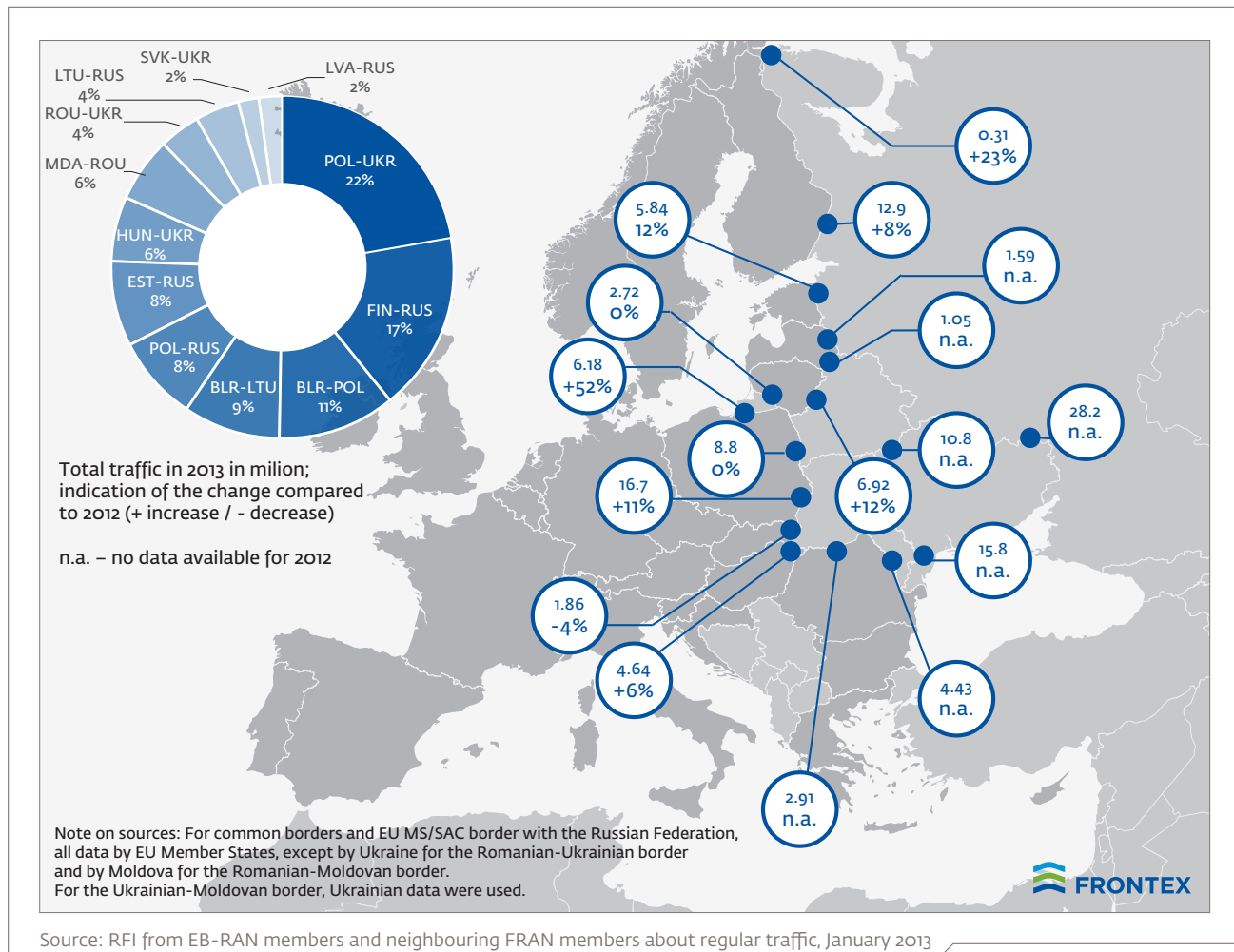
From the point of view of EU Member State border authorities this means that a large majority of travellers go through the more thorough checks. Thus the growth in the traffic of non-EU nationals increases not only the number of checks but also the average time of performing the check.

* Data on regular traffic were collected for the second year in a row. However, due to some changes in sources as well as some problems in the traffic-data collection systems amongst Member States, data sets of 2012 and 2013 are not fully comparable for all border sections. Therefore, a precise comparison of total regular traffic figures is not possible. However, the data clearly show an overall growing trend of regular traffic.



Figure 4. **Data on the number of border-crossings (entry and exit) show growth at several border sections**

Number of border-crossings in million by border section. For the Moldovan-Ukrainian border section the data by Ukraine shown in the map cover the whole border. According to Moldova the number of border-crossings at the sections of the border that are under control of Moldovan constitutional authorities was 9.7 million



Outlook on regular passenger traffic

Most of the long-term factors, such as the development of transport connections and increased issuance of passports and visas, point to a continuing growth of regular passenger traffic. However, in the shorter term it is possible that this trend may stagnate or, at some border sections, even turn to a decrease in 2014. The reason is the slowdown

of economic growth in the Russian Federation and Ukraine – and the weakening of their currencies in relation to the euro – which is likely to limit the growth potential of regular traffic in the coming year in terms of tourism, shopping trips and lorry traffic. Much also depends on the Ukrainian crisis and its impact on the economy. However, based on the experiences from 2009, the effect of an economic drop on the foreign travel was less

dramatic in the case of cheaper travel options to the nearby regions than in the case of more expensive longer-distance travel.

In contrast to general developments, the EU-Moldova visa liberalisation implemented in April 2014 is likely to have a positive impact on the growth of regular traffic at the Moldovan-Romanian border, though Moldova assesses the impact as relatively low.

Visas

EU-level data on visa issuance for 2013 are not yet available, but according to the data for 2012 the issuance of visas by Member States* in EB-RAN countries and the Russian Federation continued to grow in 2012. In fact visas issued in the Russian Federation alone accounted for 42% of all visas issued in 2012, with nearly 6 million visas representing a 15% increase compared to the previous year. Visas issued in Ukraine followed, with 1 283 014 visas issued in 2012, which was a 10% increase compared to 2011.

In 2012 Finland issued by far the largest number of visas (1 313 864) in the Russian Federation, with an 11% increase compared to 2011, followed by Spain (920 490, increase by 23%), Greece (655 887) and Italy (631 120). Poland was the biggest issuer of visas in Ukraine (447 813, an increase of 21% compared to 2011).

According to Finnish data, the growth of visa issuance continued in 2013, with roughly 1.5 million visas issued in the Russian Federation.

Although the figures from 2012 only partly influenced the situation in 2013 (in terms of longer one- or two-year visas) and not all traffic conducted by these visas shows up at common borders, the trend of visa issuance is an important indicator of possible traffic growth and possible use of legal travel channels. On the other hand, it also gives context against which the trends in illegal border-

crossings, refusals of entry and illegal stay can be better analysed.

The average refusal rate for all visa applications in 2012 was 4.8%. Considering visas issued in Ukraine, Belarus and the Russian Federation the refusal rates were considerably lower, pointing to an overall lower per capita risk of irregular migration. Refusal rate for visas issued in 2012 was 2% in Ukraine, 0.9% in the Russian Federation and 0.5% in Belarus. In relative terms, the highest rate of refused visas among EB-RAN countries was registered in Moldova (with refusals ratio of 6.6%); however, a sharply decreasing trend was observed from 11.4% in 2010 to 4.8% in 2013.

Number of passports issued in the Russian Federation grows sharply

The number of passport** holders in the Russian Federation has risen sharply in recent years raising the potential for regular cross-border traffic. While in 2008 it was estimated that the share of citizens of the Russian Federation was only 5% the current estimate is 17% or roughly 23-25 million. While the passport holders have tended to concentrate in the large cities, such as Moscow and St Petersburg, the number of issued passports in the provinces has grown recently too. During the first three months of 2013 there were already 2.7 million passport issued, which was 22.5% more than during the corresponding period of the last year.

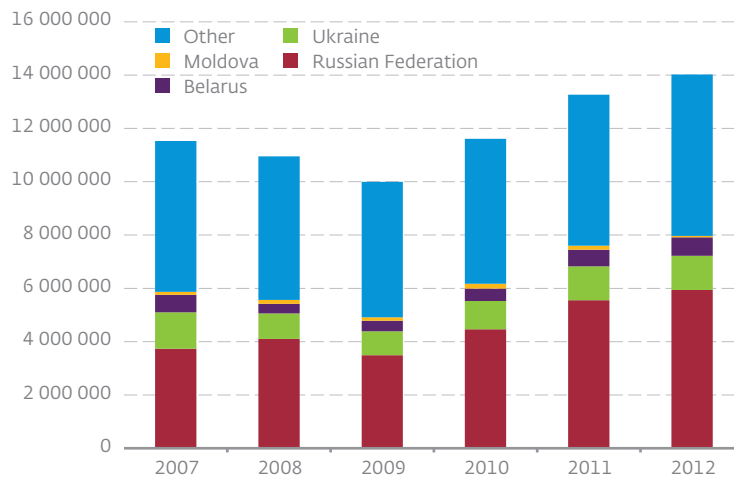
* At the time of writing of this report data on EU visa issuance for 2013 were not yet available. Visa data are collected on the basis of the place of making the application and not on the nationality of the visa applicant. Thus, for instance, applications made in the Russian Federation do not necessarily concern only Russian nationals. However, the data can be used as the most suitable approximation of the number of visas issued to citizens of that country.

** In the Russian Federation there are two types of passports: the domestic and the international. The domestic is compulsory for all citizens over 14 years of age and it is also valid for travel to most CIS countries. However, the international passport is required for all other cross-border travel.



Figure 5. Issuance of short-term visas in EB-RAN countries and the Russian Federation continued to grow in 2012

Short-term visas issued in 2007–2012



Source: European Commission Directorate-General Home Affairs, *Overview of Schengen Visa Statistics 2009-2012, 2013*.



© Polish Border Guard

Figure 6. Budomierz-Hrushev BCP at the Polish-Ukrainian border

Possible measures to mitigate growing pressure in border checks

Growth of regular traffic in recent years has required increased resources from the border authorities to maintain security and facilitate travel. Consistent efforts to develop BCP infrastructure are needed to keep up with the growing traffic flows.

For example, after finishing the reconstruction of Privalka BCP – which increased its capacity threefold – Belarus continues reconstruction of several BCPs. Belarus is also interested in changing the status of some BCPs from local to international. In order to lift the pressure from the existing BCPs, new BCPs are also being built, such as Budomierz-Hrushev between Poland and Ukraine, which was opened in December 2013.

However, in the current economic situation there are limits to investments in the new BCPs. Therefore, a new approach and innovative solutions to increase the efficiency of the currently available resources are necessary. The following not all-encompassing list of mitigation measures is intended to give a quick look at the measures that have been planned or implemented at various border sections in the region.

a) New logistical and technical solutions for border checks

Effectiveness and speed of border checks can be enhanced by minimising the time required for passengers to move from the vehicles to the checks. One possible solution is the implementation of checks at particular lanes, as planned at large BCPs in southeast Finland. The general principle is that first-line border checks are made while the passengers are staying in their vehicles. The first experiences from the Finnish BCP of Imatra have been good.

Poland, on the other hand, has constructed special lanes for LBT permit holders at the BCP of Grzechotki in order to speed up checks.

Train border checks have also been developed either with mobile checks performed on trains (for example Helsinki/St Petersburg) or at departure stations (for example Vilnius/Minsk) thus minimising long stops at BCPs and allowing more time for the checks.



© Finnish Border Guard

Figure 7. **Plan of infrastructure for lane checks (now under construction)**

Automated Border Control (ABC) can also help decrease pressure on BCP personnel. Looking from the EU-side of the border, the main problem has been the technical difficulty in using the ABC by third-country nationals.

b) Online queuing/registration systems for border checks

In order to avoid the formation of queues and to make border-crossing smoother for bona fide travellers, several Member States (Lithuania, Estonia and Finland) have adopted or are planning to introduce online systems for lorry and/or passenger traffic where a time slot for border checks can be ordered in advance. According to open sources, similar systems are planned also by the Russian Federal Agency for the Development of the State Border Facilities (Rosgranitsa) at the Finnish-Russian border.

In addition to providing comfort to travellers, these systems make the operational environment more predictable for the border authorities and help in planning the use of resources.

Another possible added value in these systems could be the exploitation of Advance Passenger Information (API). However, in the current systems, the data required to reserve the slot are limited, for example, to the name of the client and registration number of the vehicle. However, the possibilities to use the information available in the queuing systems should be fully explored.

c) Strengthening of the co-operation between border authorities, especially customs

Close cooperation between border and Customs authorities is one of the key issues in improving the capacity to counter cross-border crime. Additionally, cooperation makes the use of resources more efficient.

In Finland, border guards and customs officials have continued the Nuija project, where the cargo and passenger traffic have been segregated. In the first phase of the project the Customs carried out first-line border checks in cargo traffic on behalf of the Border Guard. Cooperation also took place in the form of joint briefings at the beginning of each shift, joint field checks (including drug detection dogs) on lanes and further training for both authorities. The use of shared databases and information systems by the Border Guard, Customs and Traffic Police also increased the speed of border control. The NUIJA2 pilot, which ran from December 2012 to October 2013, further expanded cooperation. The Border Guard conducted certain duties on behalf of the Customs, for example checking vehicle insurances, tax-free sales export validation i.e. checking and stamping tax-free cheques and invoices. The project has resulted in more flexible and efficient use of resources and an altogether smoother process for customers (one-stop shop).

d) Legal changes considering private imports of excise goods

Small-scale smuggling of excise goods, especially petrol, for resale purposes has been



widespread at several border sections. In some locations these activities produced significant queues at BCPs. Consequently, the restrictions of these activities can have important impacts on the volume of passenger flows. For example, when Estonia restricted the number of imports of fuel without excise duty in December 2013 to only one per month the traffic flow decreased by 20% arguably streamlining the border checks of other regular passenger flows.

The smoothness of border checks is, indeed, a factor in the development of tourism. For example, it has been assessed that the reasons for the recent growth in Russian tourism in Estonia included improved transportation links and shorter queues for border checks.

e) Future possibilities: entry/exit-systems and Registered Passenger Programs

An EU-level Entry/Exit System to record the time and place of entry and exit of third-country nationals would make checks of period of stay faster and at the same time mitigate the risk of the use of false stamps. Registered Traveller Programmes (RTPs) would allow certain groups of frequent travellers from third countries to enter using simplified border checks, again speeding up the checks.

From the EU-point of view these mitigation measures are included into the Smart Borders package that should be fully implemented.

2.2. Irregular migration

The trends in irregular migration at the common borders were mixed with fewer detected attempts of illegal border-crossing but clearly more refusals of entry, indicating rising the risk of abuse of legal travel channels. Cross-border criminality, mainly of large- and small-scale smuggling of excise goods (tobacco), trafficking in stolen vehicles, and smuggling

of drugs also remained an important threat to border security at several border sections. Cross-border crime was also behind a large number of detected illegal border-crossings, especially those involving migrants of regional nationalities.

Illegal border-crossing

Detections at common and regional borders

Detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs dropped slightly by 11% from 5 299 to 4 708 at common and regional borders (including the border with the Russian Federation with data from the EU or EB-RAN member side of the border only). Similarly, detections of illegal border-crossing at BCPs dropped by 15% from 2 236 to 1 908.

However, it should be strongly stressed that only 33% of the detected illegal border-crossings between BCPs and merely 9.4% of those at BCPs were associated with the purpose of irregular migration, while the share of smuggling purposes was 12% and 19%, respectively. 'Other' reasons, which accounted for 40% of the detections and were reported especially from the regional borders, were often connected with illegal hunting, fishing and other local-level activities with little or no impact on the wider EB-RAN region.

Detections by Member States/Schengen Associated Countries

In 2013 detections of illegal border-crossing by the Member States remained at a low level in comparison with other parts of the EU borders: only 1.2% of all illegal border-crossings reported by Member States at external borders were reported from the 6 000-kilometre-long EU's eastern borders.

In line with figures from common and regional borders, Member States also reported

decreasing (-18%) detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs in 2013 (1 316) compared with the previous year (1 597). However, the figures were still clearly higher than in 2011 (1 049). The drop in relation to 2012 can be explained by two main factors: the drop in detections of Somali nationals at the Slovakian-Ukrainian border and the overall increase in detections of illegal border-crossing by the Belarusian authorities at the Lithuanian-Belarusian border.

The decrease of detections at the so-called eastern border route contrasted with the rising trend of detections of illegal border-crossing at the EU external border in general (+48% in comparison with 2012). Although the same external factors, such as the Syrian war, do have impact on practically all European borders, the magnitude of that impact in terms of irregular migration flows remained low at common land borders. The decrease of transiting non-regional migrants, especially Somalis and Afghans, at the eastern border route could be partly explained by the difficulty and cost of taking the eastern border route when compared with other cheaper and more reliable alternative routes towards the EU in 2013.

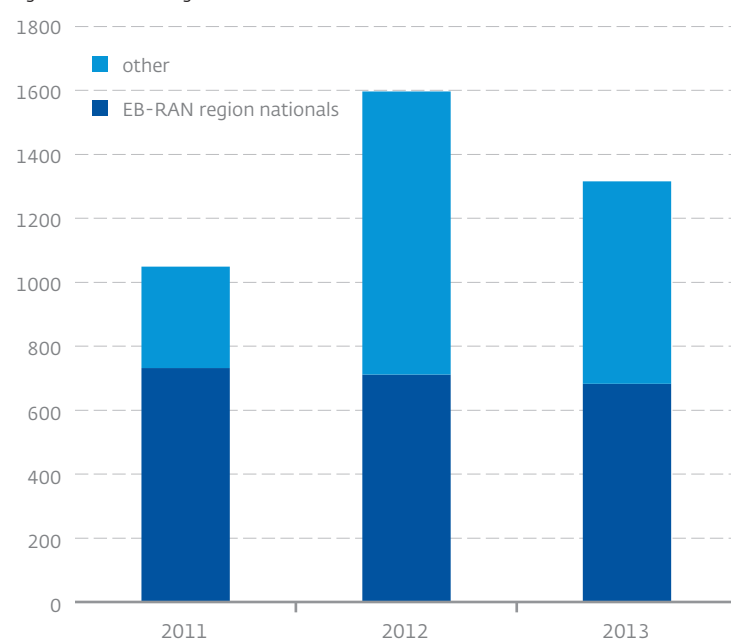
The number of detected attempts of clandestine entry at the BCPs at common borders by Member States was only six (all reported by Romania). However, considering the high volume of vehicles, lorries and both cargo and passenger trains crossing common borders, the risk of use of this *modus operandi* should not be underestimated.

Composition of the flow

Member States detected more illegal border-crossings by regional nationalities (CIS* countries and Georgia) than transiting non-regional ones. However, in relative terms non-regional migrants more often tend to use illegal border-crossing as the *modus operandi* to enter the EU. Moreover, there is a

Figure 8. Shares of regional and non-regional (other) migrants in detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs by Member States in 2013 show a slightly declining number of regional migrants and more fluctuation in the number of detections of other migrants

Detection of illegal border-crossings by neighbouring Member States in 2013 with shares of regional and other migrants



Source: FRAN data as of 10 February 2014

qualitative difference in the purpose of illegal border-crossing. As regards regional nationalities over one-third of cases were connected with other reasons than irregular migration (smuggling, other reasons), while in the case of transiting flows originating outside of the region, irregular migration was clearly the main purpose of illegal entry.

In terms of nationalities reported by Member States, Georgians (235) ranked first, mainly detected at the Lithuanian-Belarusian border, followed by Afghans (149, mainly at the Slovakian-Ukrainian border) and the Vietnamese (149, mainly at the Lithuanian-Belarusian border). Syrian nationals were the fastest growing detected nationality, though the numbers of detections (114, or +208% in comparison with 2012 at all borders in question) remained low in wider European context.

* Commonwealth of Independent States



Main entry points

At common borders, in view of the data available from the both sides of the border, the busiest border sections in terms of detections of illegal border-crossing between BCPs were the Slovakian-Ukrainian (-13% in comparison with 2012) and the Lithuanian-Belarusian borders (-2.7% compared with 2012). However, considering the Lithuanian-Belarusian border, it should be noted that the share of detections reported by Belarus rose, thus decreasing the pressure at the EU-side of the border.

The largest increase reported by Member States was +163% reported by Estonia (with no data from the Russian Federation). However, the growth resulted mainly from changes in reporting. Moreover, only a minority of detections was connected with irregular migration.

Abuse of legal entry

In contrast to the relatively stable trend in detections of illegal border-crossings, the number of refusals of entry rose to over 50 000, i.e. 39% of the EU total, indicating a growing risk of abuse of legal travel channels. While the increase in refusals of entry can be partly explained by growing regular traffic, two main individual phenomena stood out in 2013:

1. A sharp increase in nationals of the Russian Federation of Chechen origin refused entry and then using asylum applications in Poland as a way to enter the EU and move further to Germany.
2. Continued flow of Georgian nationals to Poland and further on to other Member States by using a variety of *modi operandi* from illegal border-crossing between BCPs to the abuse of the asylum system.

The main entry point in both cases was the Polish-Belarusian border, which issued roughly half of the total number of refusals

in 2013 (it should be noted that some persons were refused multiple times).

It can be assessed that the issue of migrants who were refused entry and applied for asylum and who subsequently absconded from reception centres was indeed the most serious phenomenon of irregular migration at the common borders in 2013. While not attracting media attention and not putting the lives of migrants at risk, the use of this *modus operandi* appears to be a significant entry channel of irregular migration to the EU. It takes advantage of legal channels of entry but also creates considerable workload for border guards at BCPs.

Document fraud

Unlike in the case of refusals of entry, detections of fraudulent documents at common borders were most commonly made at the borders with Ukraine. Záhony BCP at the Hungarian land border with Ukraine reported the most cases of document fraud on entry to the EU/Schengen area.

Although there was a decreasing trend in detections, the most common type of fraudulent document remained counterfeit stamps that were mostly used by Ukrainian nationals in order to conceal overstaying. Indeed, in the case of Ukrainian nationals more persons were detected using false documents on exit from Schengen area/EU than on entry.

The detections of fraudulent documents by EB-RAN countries remained stable with Ukraine reporting 69% of detections.

2.3. Institutional changes

Visa liberalisation process with Eastern Partnership countries

The EU conducts 'Visa Liberalisation Dialogues' with three Eastern Partnership coun-

tries, namely Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. Through these dialogues, the EU is taking gradual steps towards the long-term goal of visa-free travel on a case-by-case basis, provided that conditions for well-managed and secure mobility are in place.*

Although only three out of the six Eastern Partnership states, namely Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, have been granted Action Plans, all the six countries, including Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan, have been working towards visa liberalisation and meeting the criteria.

In November 2013, the Commission proposed to grant visa-free travel to the Schengen area for Moldovan citizens holding a biometric passport. This proposal was built on the successful implementation by the Republic of Moldova of all the benchmarks set in its Visa Liberalisation Action Plan. Visa liberalisation between the EU and Moldova entered into force on 28 April 2014.

As there is already a considerable mobility between Moldova and Romania, fuelled for example by a large number of Romanian passport holders in Moldova and well-developed security features of Moldovan travel documents, neither Moldova nor Romania expect visa liberalisation to radically change the operational environment at their common borders.

Possible general impacts of visa liberalisations

Except for Moldova, the timetable leading to actual visa liberalisation is not known, but some consequences for border-control authorities can be outlined.

While visa liberalisation would promote and ease cross-border traffic, it would also increase the workload of border authorities. In the absence of a visa procedure, the nature

of the checks would change and the assessment of the validity of entry would fall fully under the responsibility of border authorities. The growth of regular traffic would be felt mostly at land borders, but it would likely also increase traffic on existing air and sea routes as well as create new routes. In some cases this might require establishing new BCPS.

As far as changes in *modus operandi* of irregular migration are concerned, it is likely that the abuse of legal entries would grow, increasing the number of refusals of entry.

As regards mitigation measures most investments should be directed to strengthen border checks. These include measures that are necessary even without visa liberalisations and – looking on the issue in the longer term – are already included in the smart borders package, including entry/exit system that would mitigate the risk of overstaying and use of forged stamps. Registered Travellers Programmes (RTP) would help to ensure smooth passenger traffic flows. Coming to the border check procedures and technology, the already existing and partly implemented solutions such as Automated Border Control, online queuing systems, and changes in the flow of traffic through the border checks (change from booths to lanes and mobile devices) are among measures that could as well mitigate the pressure at BCPS.

The management of regular traffic flows as well as identifying criminal activities among it would also require continuous and smooth information exchange between the authorities, including the Customs, on the both sides of the border, as well as police and migration authorities inland. In this regard, the activities of liaison officers could be broadened from visa issuance and border check support to a wider co-operation in criminal investigations, information exchange and risk analysis.

* At an extraordinary meeting on 6 March 2014, the European Council decided to suspend bilateral talks with the Russian Federation on visa matters. This means that, at the time of writing, visa-free travel for Russian citizens has been postponed indefinitely.



The roll-out of and impact of Visa Information System and possible impacts on local border traffic permits

Local border traffic agreements (LBTAs) provide for the issuance of permits entitling border residents to cross an external border under the local border traffic regime. In general LBT permits do not include other biometric identifiers besides the photograph of the holder. In light of the mandatory introduction of fingerprint checks in the Visa Information System at land borders from October 2014, there arises a question of whether LBT permits will be still exempt from the requirement to provide fingerprints. Mandatory fingerprints in border checks will most likely increase the average time spent at a border check thus adding to the challenge to keep the traffic smooth.

2.4. Environmental scan

Transit and origin countries

■ Russian Federation

The Russian Federation is one of the largest receivers of migrants in the world, with roughly 10 million foreign workers in the country. The flow of irregular migration to the Russian Federation, especially with the intention to undertake unauthorised employment, continues at a large scale, too.

In fact two contradictory trends coexist in the Russian migration policy. First, there is a recognised need for foreign workforce in the Russian Federation as well as plans to free the movement of labour in the context of the Common Economic Space and the planned Eurasian Union. On the other hand, there is an increasing popular and political criticism against the use of foreign workforce reflected in the wide-scale police raids against the migrants coming not just from

abroad, but also from the Northern Caucasus region of the Russian Federation.

Estimates of the foreign labour force in the Russian Federation vary. The Russian Federal Migration Service assesses the number of irregular labour migrants at roughly 3.5–4 million. Of these, a large majority have arrived in the Russian Federation legally, but are working without permits.

The large number of irregular migrant workforce is explained by two factors. First, the official quota for foreign workforce tends to be significantly smaller than the demand for labour. Secondly, visa freedom between CIS countries and the Russian Federation makes entering the Russian Federation legally easy, after which it is relatively easy to find work.

The authorities have aimed to curb irregular migration by tightening legislation and introducing heavier fines. For example, in August 2013 new fines were introduced for migrants detected for illegal stay in Moscow and St Petersburg. According to these new rules, persons without valid documents for work or stay would be fined from RUB 5 000 to 7 000 (EUR ~110–160) and face deportation with an entry ban for five years.

Moreover, according to the new Russian regulations that came into force on 1 January 2014, foreigners – including citizens from CIS countries – who lack long-term visas can stay in the Russian Federation for 90 days in a 180-day period. Previously, it was enough to cross the border in order to get a new entry stamp to renew the 90-day permission. Violators are subject to a three-year ban on entering the Russian Federation. For those who are working in the Russian Federation without permission this may create an incentive to develop new *modi operandi* to circumvent this rule, such as falsifying entry/exit stamps.

In addition to the new regulations, the migration issue became increasingly politicised in 2013. Two large anti-migrant riots in Moscow in 2013 – in August and October – were followed by the Russian authorities' raids on work places and accommodation of illegally working migrants. The police discovered, for example, garment factories with irregular foreign workforce. Many detainees were Vietnamese, but included Egyptian and Syrian nationals, too. Many Vietnamese migrants had been working illegally in Russia's textile industry for years, often in conditions of near-slavery. According to open sources, several thousands of migrants were detained.

These intensified raids on irregular migrants could trigger more movements towards EB-RAN countries and the EU. If the current economic downturn in the Russian Federation continues – due to the crisis in Ukraine and possible further sanctions on the Russian Federation – and has a negative impact on the labour market, migrants may start to look for new destinations. The most likely groups possibly attempting to search for work in the EU could include groups with significant diasporas both in the EU and the Russian Federation, including nationals of Vietnam. During the previous economic depression in 2009 the migrants originating from the CIS area mostly opted to return to their home countries.

In the North Caucasus region the situation remains tense especially in Dagestan, which has witnessed most political violence in the Russian Federation in recent years. Although Chechnya has been relatively calm, instability in the region as a whole has increased as militants moved over from Chechnya to other republics. Dagestan is also one of the poorest areas of the Russian Federation and has one of the youngest populations in the country. Continued attempts of nationals of the Russian Federation from the

Northern Caucasus region to enter the EU either for security or economic reasons are therefore likely.

Selected countries of origin

Nationals of a wide variety of countries are detected for irregular migration using EB-RAN countries mainly as a transit area. In terms of possible changes in 2014 two countries can be highlighted: Syria and Afghanistan.

■ Syria

The complex dynamics of the civil war in Syria – which includes ethnic, religious and sectarian overtones, plus influential regional geopolitics not to mention Islamist extremism – will continue to contribute to the protraction of any political resolution to the conflict. The reign of terror plus other socio-economic considerations, including the extent of urban tenements' destruction, will hinder returns back home at least in the short to medium term.

With no end of the conflict in sight, considering the atrocities committed, difficult conditions in refugee camps, cities and towns, and no viable framework for a realistic political transition, Syrians will increasingly consider and eventually likely opt to leave their current place of refuge (over 2.5 million Syrians are already registered as refugees outside Syria – UNHCR) in order to secure a better future for their families.

Migratory pressure on the EU's external borders as well as EB-RAN countries' borders is bound to continue as larger numbers of Syrian nationals, and those claiming to be of Syrian nationality, will seek different options beyond finding refuge in the countries immediately bordering Syria. In the CIS region, Armenia and the Russian Federation are the most likely destinations with possi-



ble secondary movements towards the EU. Therefore, continued inflows through multiple border sections should be expected.

■ Afghanistan

Afghanistan is currently in the middle of a complicated transition in key fields of security, the economy and institutions. The successes or failures of this transition are closely felt by the Afghan society and are also impacting the patterns of emigration.

There are already signs that the uncertainty about Afghanistan's future has reversed years of decline in the outflow of refugees, in which returning Afghans consistently outnumbered those fleeing. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is growing and is currently estimated at some 600 000. The number of voluntary returns is declining, too. According to UNHCR, a total of 94 000 Afghans returned to Afghanistan voluntarily in 2012, but in 2013 this figure fell to roughly 38 000.* It also seems that the number of Afghan asylum seekers is growing again. According to the Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations, the most recent figures show 60 000 Afghan asylum seekers in 2013 in Western and other industrialised countries.

Indeed, it is estimated that Afghanistan currently has a net outflow of people, in numbers not seen since 2001. Still, the future scale of outward migration from Afghanistan is still depending on the success of the complex transition in the area of security, the economy and institutions. Moreover, the scale of migration outside of the region depends on the policies of Iran and Pakistan in relation to Afghan migrants.

The lead responsibility for security in Afghanistan has, since 2013, gradually been transitioned from the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the Af-

ghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The aim is for Afghan forces to have full responsibility for security across the country by the end of 2014.

At the end of 2013 it was clear that security situation in Afghanistan continued to be highly volatile. Afghan forces were able to respond to attacks and mostly held on. While the Taliban's assassination campaign did take a heavy toll on police officials and lower-level district officials, it is assessed that it did not succeed in breaking the central government's ability to function. Most of the fighting remained in the eastern and southern parts of Afghanistan and was waged outside large cities.

At the same time, the Taliban did not show signs of weakening either. The Afghan security forces were not able to make significant gains and also suffered heavy casualties that, according to unofficial sources, may have doubled since last year. According to the CSIS, total ISAF and ANSF casualties are now in fact far higher than at any previous moment in the war, in spite of the fact that the ISAF's share of casualties is now negligible. In the southern rural areas of Afghanistan, the insurgents' continued appearance as the more credible military force out of cities added weight to theories that the Taliban could be controlling those areas after 2014.

Although the ANSF did succeed mostly to contain Taliban advances in 2013, the targeted killing of public officials and civilians indicates that a growing group of Afghan citizens are under increasing personal security threat.

Facing the possible decrease of foreign aid, it is also assessed that incomes from drug-trade will be increasingly important. According to UNOCD, opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan reached a record high in 2013. In 2013 the cultivation amounted to some 209 000

* UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Volrep and Border Monitoring Monthly Update*, December 2013, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/52d7b3e84.html> [accessed 13 June 2014]

hectares, a 36% increase over 2012. Moreover, two provinces that had previously been declared poppy-free in northern Afghanistan lost this status. All in all, opium production in 2013 went up to some 5 500 tonnes, a 49% increase over 2012. In 2013 opium exports represented roughly 14% of the GDP of the country. As the level of opium production has tended to correlate with low development and high insecurity, the future prospects are worrying. This would also affect the countries on the export routes of the drugs – including Central Asian CIS countries and the Russian Federation.

To conclude, it is likely that the problems encountered in all fields of transition will increase internal displacement, decrease voluntary returns and increase emigration from Afghanistan. In the past, a great majority of the Afghans leaving the country were able to find means of living in Iran or Pakistan. The current increasing reluctance of the governments of these two countries to receive Afghan migrants and refugees is, however, making this option less viable. This in turn is likely to increase the likelihood of attempts of secondary irregular movements out of the region, impacting among others the CIS region.



3. Annual risk assessment 2014

The following risk assessment is guided by the CIRAM working definition of risk as a function of three main components: threat, vulnerability and impact. A systematic examination of each component allows for classifying risks into categories of significance. Establishing a general context in which border authorities from EB-RAN countries and the neighbouring Member States operated during 2013 is therefore important for identifying the main border (regional and common) security risks. To narrow down the selection, a detailed analysis of the available monthly statistical data (both FRAN and EB-RAN), Frontex operational data, bi-monthly reports and previous EB-RAN annual risk analyses was performed. The following three main risks have been identified:

1. Risk of cross-border smuggling and exploitation of green/blue borders as a point of entry for smuggled goods (smuggling of tobacco products, precursors and drugs, stolen vehicles, and other goods);
2. Risk of significant transiting irregular migration flows originating outside of the wider EB-RAN region (e.g. 'non-regional' irregular migrants from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America);
3. Risk of sustained irregular migration flows originating from the EB-RAN region, including CIS countries and Georgia.

Each identified risk is described in detail, broken down by its main components.

3.1. Risk of cross-border smuggling and exploitation of green/blue borders as a point of entry for smuggled goods (smuggling of tobacco products, precursors and drugs, stolen vehicles, and other goods)

3.1.1. Description of the threat

EB-RAN data, as well as information from Frontex-coordinated Joint Operations supported by open-source information, indicates that cross-border criminality, mainly large- and small-scale smuggling of excise goods, trafficking in stolen vehicles and the smuggling of drugs remain the most significant threat to border security at the common land borders.

Due to the legal and institutional characteristics, national Border Guard authorities along the EU eastern border have different types and degrees of responsibility in the fight against cross-border crime. Moreover, the nature and extent of inter-agency cooperation at the external borders differs greatly between these countries. Typically, preventing the smuggling of goods falls more under the responsibility of Customs authorities than border guards. Nevertheless, border guards regularly have to react and engage in combating these criminal activities, especially along the green borders. Indeed, according to statistical data, at some border sections the smuggling of goods seems to be a more frequent reason for illegal border-crossing than reasons related to migration.

Smuggling of excise goods

As a response to the euro and financial crisis of the last years, many EU governments increased their taxes on excise goods. Between July 2012 and 2013, at least ten Mem-

ber States increased their duties on cigarettes, on average by EUR 0.33 per pack of the 'Most popular price category', as defined by the European Commission.*

Currently, the customer would pay EUR 5 for an average pack of cigarettes in Finland, whereas across the Russian border, the same pack would cost him only around EUR 1.5. Not only individual consumers and small-scale smugglers from economically weak border regions try to take advantage of existing price differences. Large-scale criminal businesses illicitly import large amounts of cigarettes hidden on cargo trains and in lorries.

Legally binding agreements signed by the EU and the four largest tobacco manufacturers with the intention to address the problem of contraband cigarettes and to prevent the oversupply of third-country markets effectively cover international brands and 80% of the world market. However, many factories producing counterfeit cigarettes and 'cheap whites' are not concerned by the limitations and the tracking system provided by these agreements.

Less prominent companies outside the EU still sell large quantities to third-country markets, where only an insignificant share of these cigarettes can be absorbed by the local demand. Much of the rest is then smuggled out to Member States. In particular, seizures of 'cheap white' brands have been showing a strong upward tendency over the past few years. An example is the Jin Ling cigarette brand produced in Kaliningrad, which grew so popular among western consumers that this brand itself is being counterfeit.

Although cigarette prices have recently also increased in the eastern neighbourhood of the EU, the smuggling of cigarettes from Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and the Russian Federation remained highly profitable and fuelled the growth of transnational organised crime

* European Commission, Excise duty tables – part III, European Commission, Directorate General, Taxation and Customs Union, REF 1038 rev 1, July 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/excise_duties/tobacco_products/rates_excise_duties-part_iii_tobacco_en.pdf



groups active in that business. Surprisingly, in Belarus, retail sales in 2012 increased despite of the upward price development. According to open sources, a large share of the risen demand was caused by 'private exports' to countries of the EU.

In 2013, most illicit cigarettes detected in the context of Frontex Joint Operations were smuggled across the eastern borders of the EU. In this context, more than 26.8 million cigarettes were seized in 374 incidents. A majority of detections were related to smaller amounts of cigarettes smuggled by residents of the border regions or other frequently travelling individuals. Excluding 10% of the largest seizures, an average of 40 cartons of illicit cigarettes were detected by the border authorities. The contraband was predominantly hidden in specially constructed concealed compartments in vehicles. Accordingly, around two-thirds of all detections at common borders were made in private cars or vans, and 13% on public buses.

The contraband of petroleum products was mainly reported from the eastern EU borders with Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. This illegal activity was fuelled by the price difference between Member States and their third-country neighbours. In many cases, the smugglers crossed the border several times a week to fill up the large or illegally extended petrol tanks of their private vehicles. This type of contraband, commonly known as 'ant smuggling', did not only cause substantial fiscal losses, but also increased the workload of border guards significantly. Fuel smugglers were, to a large extent, responsible for long border queues at the BCPs at common borders. Member States like Estonia, Poland and Slovakia are currently taking measures to prevent that individuals cross the borders on a regular basis to import fuel for other than private use. Travellers arriving in Estonia by car, for example, may now bring fuel exempt from excise duty in the quantity

of one regular fuel tank only at the first entry within a calendar month.

Exit of stolen vehicles

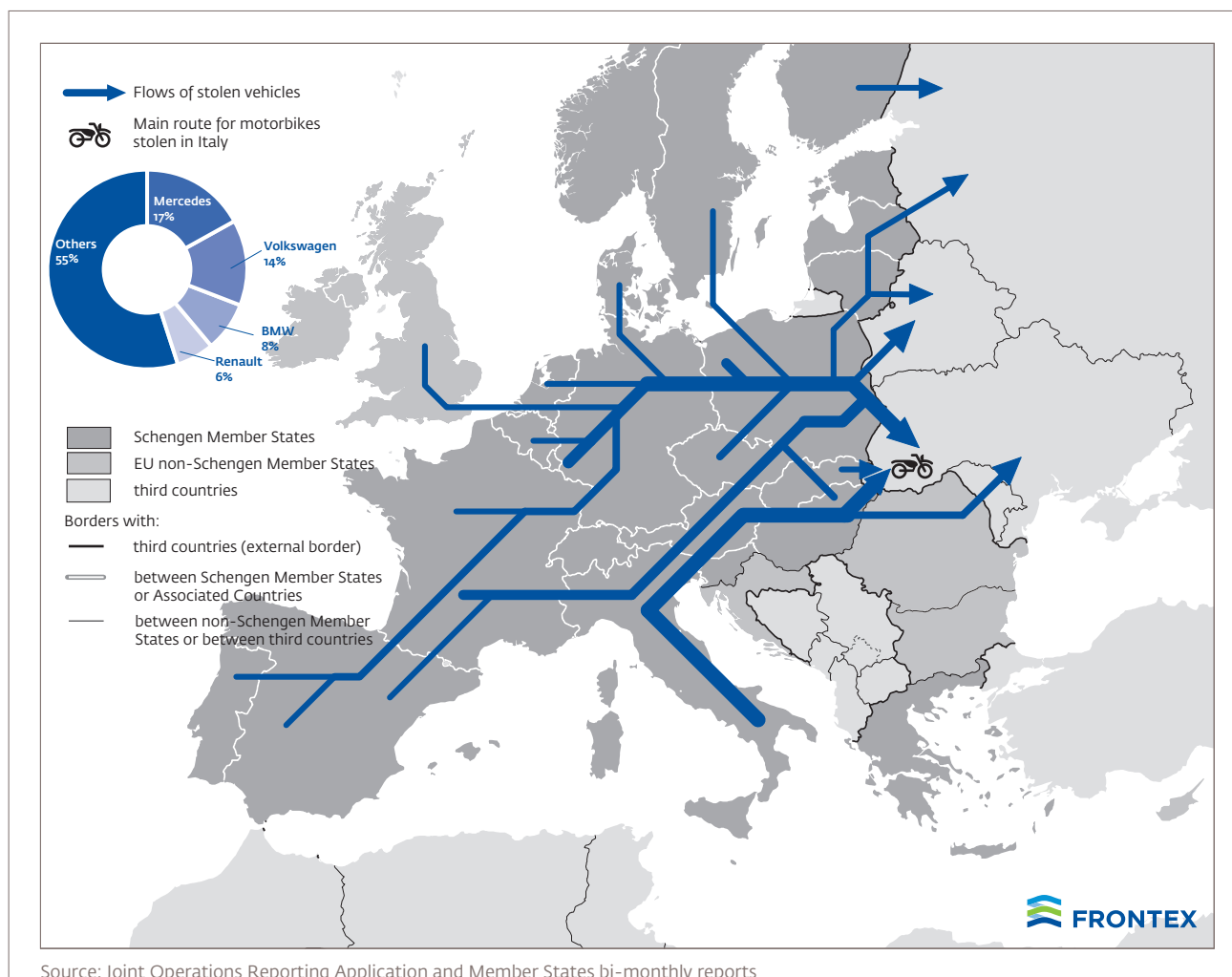
According to Eurostat, the total number of vehicles, including cars, motor cycles, buses, lorries, construction and agricultural vehicles, stolen in the EU has been steadily falling from 1.85 million in 1998 to 0.88 million in 2010. Among the reasons were the development of advanced technical anti-theft measures and intensified international law-enforcement cooperation.

Only a small share of the vehicles stolen in the EU is detected at its external borders, often in the context of Frontex Joint Operations. In contrast to the overall theft statistics, detections at the borders reported to Frontex have been slightly rising from 498 in 2012 to 519 in 2013, around 60% of these at the EU's eastern borders. The increase was mainly caused by a rise in awareness and related expertise of Frontex Guest Officers and regular border guards.

Most car thefts were detected by queries in the SIS II, INTERPOL and national theft databases for the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) specified on the engine, frame and major parts of most motor vehicles. Car thieves applied various *modi operandi* to cloud the identity of their stolen vehicles at the external borders, such as through manipulation of the VIN number. In other cases, vehicles were disassembled into parts to obscure identification or powers of attorney containing an authorisation to travel abroad were counterfeit.

The above mentioned *modi operandi* were regularly reported at the EU's eastern borders, where detections of stolen vehicles on exit increased from 289 in 2012 to 313 in 2013. The vehicle brand preferences did not change during the last years, as around 40% of the cars detected were produced by Volkswa-

Figure 9. **EB-RAN countries continue to be one of the main markets for vehicles stolen in the EU**
 Main routes of stolen vehicles across the EU's eastern borders



gen, Mercedes Benz and BMW. The majority of persons driving stolen vehicles were nationals of the country to which they intended to leave the EU. For example, 131 of the 192 persons attempting to transfer their stolen vehicle to Ukraine were of Ukrainian nationality, only 35 were EU citizens.

Most cases were reported from the Ukrainian border, with numbers slightly decreasing

from 189 in 2012 to 175 in 2013. The majority of the cars stopped on their way to Ukraine were stolen in Italy (26%), Germany (20%) and Spain (9%). Most stolen vehicles were about to leave the EU through Polish BCPs to Ukraine, particularly Medyka and Korczowa, which are situated at or in proximity to the economically important European Route E40 that connects Western Europe with the countries of Central Asia.



With 70 detections of stolen vehicles in 2013, numbers reported from the Belarusian border remained stable in comparison to 2012. Moreover, Belarusian authorities reported frequent attempts to avoid import duties for both bought and stolen vehicles through the use of Belarusian vehicle documents and number plates belonging to 'twin' vehicles of similar appearance and technical specifications. Another way to evade import duties involved EU citizens requesting a duty-free temporary admission and subsequently transferring the vehicle to a Belarusian national.

Border guards deployed at the EU external borders to Ukraine and Belarus registered further increase in the number of motorbikes stolen in Italy. As reported to Frontex, the phenomenon spread to an extent that this vehicle type represented more than 74% of all Italian stolen vehicles detected at the border to Ukraine in 2013. From Italy, where the motorbikes were disassembled and loaded onto buses and vans, organised crime groups took the shortest routes and entered Ukraine from Hungary or the south of Poland. Most motorbikes were identified at the BCPs of Záhony and Medyka, being the nearest BCPs from Italy.

Smuggling of illicit drugs

Towards the end of 2013, border authorities have seen a spate of cannabis smuggled from Poland to Belarus and Ukraine. Belarusian and Polish Border Guards reported that only between September and December they detected six major trafficking cases leading to the seizure of the total amount of around 230 kg of cannabis. In the largest of these cases, a resident of St Petersburg attempted to smuggle 90 kg of cannabis in a concealed compartment of his private vehicle. Also late in 2013, the Polish Border Guard seized 175 kg of hashish, which Russian nationals intended to traffic to Ukraine. The coming months will show whether these

incidents were part of a temporary surge or represented an emerging trend.

While, according to estimates of UNODC, the use of heroin generally decreased in the EU, substantial seizures of the substance were reported from the EU's eastern borders. In one of the cases uncovered in March 2013, Belarusian police and Customs authorities seized more than 85 kg of heroin at the BCP of Kotlovka at the Lithuanian-Belarusian border. The substance was smuggled hidden in a semitrailer driven by a Moldovan citizen.

Authorities and international organisations have observed that the northern route leading through Central Asia and the Russian Federation is continuously used to supply markets of both the EU and its eastern neighbours. One reason for the lasting significance of this route is presumably related to the establishment of the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. According to EMCDDA and Europol, Lithuanian organised crime groups have access to the heroin trafficked via Central Asian countries through their Russian crime connections and therefore play an important role in its distribution in north-eastern Europe.

An international operation in October 2013 conducted in the Afghan Badakhshan province caused a major blow to opiate trade along the northern route. Afghanistan's anti-drug police in cooperation with the Russian drug control service and with support of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration raided two drug laboratories and seized more than 4.7 tonnes of opiates and 1.2 tonnes of opium poppy seeds.*

Regarding amphetamines, the Russian Federation is assessed to be one of the most important source countries of the precursor chemical 1-phenyl-2-propanone (BMK), a colourless or slightly yellow oily liquid. BMK is systematically smuggled across the EU east-

* <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/705571>

ern borders to amphetamine production sites in the EU. Significant production of amphetamines was reported by Poland and the Baltic countries. Amphetamines produced in the EU are trafficked extensively within the EU and, to a lesser extent, across its eastern borders.

In the other direction of drug flow the Russian Federation and, to a lesser extent, Belarus and Ukraine have become destination countries of synthetic drugs and cocaine smuggled from and via the EU. A significant number of seizures in Central Europe suggest that cocaine from South America is increasingly trafficked to eastern markets within and outside the EU. According to EMCDDA, the proportion of cocaine seizures in ten countries located at the EU's eastern border increased from a very low level of 0.1% in 2001 to 1.8% in 2011. The EU Drug Markets Report 2013 thus highlights the Eastern Baltic Sea area as potentially an emerging cocaine entry point.

3.1.3. Mitigation

Changes in legislation

Adjustments of legislation and introduction of limitations for the import of excise goods

may give border officials the authority to tackle small-scale fuel or cigarette smuggling at BCPs. It would, moreover, reduce the workload of border authorities.

Close cooperation between border-control authorities and Customs services

The detection of drugs and smuggled excise goods requires a close cooperation between border-control authorities and customs services.

Improved international cooperation

The exchange of information on criminal groups, *modi operandi* and stolen property would assist border guards in the detection of cross-border crime. Access to INTERPOL databases on stolen vehicles should be enhanced.

Capacity building and procurement of technical equipment

Enhancing technical equipment at BCPs would improve the efficiency of border guards' work in the identification of stolen vehicles and machinery, as well as (synthetic) drugs.



3.2. Risk of significant transiting irregular migration flows originating outside of the wider EB-RAN region

3.2.1. Description of the threat

EB-RAN countries are used as a transit area to the EU by irregular migrants originating from outside of the region, including the Middle East, South Asia and South East Asia. In addition to illegal entries, these transit flows often include further irregular secondary movements within the EU as the main destination countries are usually situated further inside the area of free movement.

However, the magnitude of this threat of transiting flow has remained relatively small when compared, for example, with routes transiting Turkey or North African countries. Arguably this is because migrants travelling along the route via EB-RAN countries or the Russian Federation face: (a) more logistic difficulties and higher costs; (b) efficiently cooperating border-control authorities on both sides of common borders; and, therefore, (c) a high risk of detection.

Still, the risk of transit use of the EB-RAN region, including the Russian Federation, should not be underestimated, especially considering the growing volume of international travel in the region, major cities near the borders (especially in the Russian Federation), evolving labour markets in the Russian Federation and the difficult situation in some of the major origin countries of migrants using this route, such as Afghanistan. Moreover, although EB-RAN countries as such do not form a unified transiting 'route' towards the EU, there are links between phenomena experienced at the different border sections along common borders, indicating that facilitators are actively searching for vulnerable border sections.

It is likely that most of the migrants arrive in the region (EB-RAN countries and/or the Russian Federation) legally or by abusing legal entries with fraudulently obtained visas and stay for varying times either irregularly or legally. In essence, migrants have then four main options of illegal entry to Member States from EB-RAN countries: (a) illegal border-crossing of the land border between BCPs; (b) clandestine entry through BCPs; (c) use of false documents at BCPs; and (d) abuse of legal travel channels.

It can be assessed that the option of illegal border-crossing between BCPs continued as the main *modus operandi* used by non-regional migrants (in contrast to regional ones, with the exception of Georgians), although the number of detections decreased slightly in relation to 2012.

New developments

■ Illegal border-crossings between BCPs

Magnitude of the threat

Member States reported 663 detections of illegal border-crossing by non-regional migrants at common borders and borders with the Russian Federation, which was 25% less compared to 2012 (886), but still 109% more compared to 2011 (317). In all cases the direction was towards the EU.

Illegal border-crossings reported on both sides of common borders (with available data for Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine) show, in relative terms, a slightly smaller 21% decrease from 1 308 in 2012 to 1 035 in 2013.

The drop was mostly due to a sharp decrease in Somali nationals detected by Slovakia. Secondly, the drop in detections by Member States was made sharper by increased detections in Belarus at its border with Lithuania,

thus decreasing the relative share of detections at the Lithuanian side of the border.

Routes

As regards the routes, the Slovakian-Ukrainian border remained the busiest in terms of detections of illegal border-crossing by the non-regional nationals. This border section was followed by the Lithuanian-Belarusian border. The northernmost section of common borders (Finland, Norway) remained peaceful in terms of illegal border-crossings, with only four detections of non-regional migrants, all Syrian nationals in 2013.

Modus operandi

According to EB-RAN experts, the process of illegal border-crossing by non-regional migrants is increasingly facilitated, consists of several legs and involves several criminal groups or hired local drivers etc. taking care of particular sections of the journey on both sides of common borders. Thus, people detected transporting the migrants are not necessary facilitators. Detections of mixed groups of different nationalities also continued in 2013, indicating that facilitators were able to attract clients from many different countries.

Seasonality

When detections at both common and regional borders are put together, a clear seasonality can be observed with the threat of illegal border-crossing peaking in July-August. However, in individual countries there were highly diverse trends. For example in Estonia, the top months of detections in 2013 were the months of January, February and October. The possible increase in attempted green border crossings during wintertime increases the risk of loss of life, especially in the case of nationalities that may not be aware of the dangers of harsh winter conditions.

Composition of the flow

Trends considering individual nationalities differed considerably in 2013, depending on a variety of push and pull factors, including the developments in origin countries, changing situation on the routes leading to the EU, and operational responses by the EU and EB-RAN country authorities.

Afghans were the top nationality detected for illegal border-crossing between BCPs in 2013 although their trend was decreasing. At common and regional borders the number of detections dropped by 20% to 263 in 2013. The drop was mostly due to fewer detections made by Poland, but in other reporting countries the trend was relatively stable. The threat of illegal border-crossings by Afghans can be assessed to remain at least stable in 2014 due to the ongoing security transition in Afghanistan and the uncertainties it produces.

The detections of nationals of Vietnam at common and regional borders (209 in 2013) grew by 8% compared with 193 in 2012. In fact, illegal border-crossing between BCPs on the eastern border route was clearly the preferred option for the nationals of Vietnam to enter the EU, with only individual cases recorded on the Western Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean routes over the recent years.

The reasons for the continuing popularity of the eastern border route among the Vietnamese are likely to include:

- a) Significant Vietnamese communities in the Russian Federation, EB-RAN countries as well as Member States.
- b) Vietnamese organised crime groups operating in the EU as well as in the Russian Federation and EB-RAN countries, creating the demand for irregular workforce.



- c) Different approaches on visa issuance to Vietnamese nationals by the Russian Federation and Belarus, making it possible for the Vietnamese to seek entry first to the Russian Federation and further to Belarus and the proximity of EU borders.

Additionally, the recent activity of the Russian Migration Service in closing some garment factories with Vietnamese irregular workforce may have triggered some of these movements.

The arrival, stay and employment of Vietnamese citizens in the Russian Federation is usually facilitated by Vietnamese networks. There are also indications that Russian visas were obtained under false pretences to enter the Russian Federation.

Vietnamese nationals mostly cross the border to the EU facilitated, though it should be noted that facilitators detected by border authorities are usually not Vietnamese, but include a variety of regional nationalities, such as Armenians. Indeed, although the crime groups behind the movements are likely to be Vietnamese, they tend to 'outsource' facilitation of these irregular movements to other crime groups. After reaching the EU, Vietnamese migrants are quickly transported in cars towards Poland, Germany and possibly further on to France and the UK, which together with Cyprus are the top five countries reporting detections of illegal stay of Vietnamese citizens.

Syrians became the third most common non-regional nationality detected for illegal border-crossing (+208%), with 114 detections in 2013 compared with 37 in 2012 and only 11 in 2011. The growing trend is clear and somewhat expected due to the war in Syria and the resulting large population displacements and refugee flows. The entry points also showed more variation. While in 2011 detections of Syrians at common borders were reported

just by two countries, in 2013 the detections were already spread over the borders of eleven countries.

In many detected cases Syrian migrants and/or facilitators had links to the Armenian Syrian community. This is due to the recent flow of Syrian citizens/refugees of Armenian origin to Armenia and close links between Armenia and EB-RAN countries and the Russian Federation.

Despite the growth in detections of illegal border-crossing by Syrian nationals, their level remained low when put in the wider EU context. This may be explained, first, by still relatively low flow of Syrian refugees to EB-RAN countries. Indeed, the number of asylum applications by Syrian nationals in the three EB-RAN countries together was only 98 in 2013. However, according to open sources, the number of applications is rising in the Russian Federation with roughly 1 000 applications in 2013, of which roughly 500 were accepted only in Moscow.

Another factor is that Syrian citizens arriving in the CIS region with the intention to continue further to the EU are opting for other *modi operandi*, such as the use of air routes. For example, according to PULSAR data*, Moscow airports, and to lesser extent Kiev, are used as departure points of asylum Syrian asylum applicants arriving in the EU.

There are also indications that Syrian citizens of Armenian ethnic background are able to obtain Armenian passports fairly easily, which enables them to travel legally in the CIS area without visas and also apply for visas with Armenian passports. For border authorities legal entries with legal passports are as such not a problem.

In contrast to Syrians, the number of detections of Somali nationals went down sharply by 79%, from 342 detections in 2012 to only

* PULSAR data collection covers all EU and Schengen Associated Countries, excluding Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Ireland and Iceland. It includes data from Moldova, Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro.

73 in 2013 at common and regional borders, which explains the overall drop in detections of transiting migrants at common borders. The decline was mainly due to a sharp decrease in detections at the Slovakian-Ukrainian border.

■ **Illegal border-crossing at BCPs (clandestine entries)**

The detection of clandestine entries of non-regional nationalities (excluding both CIS and EU nationals) has been limited to individual cases at common borders. Most of the detections were made at regional borders. Moreover, only a minority of the cases reported were related to irregular migration.

Due to the growing regular traffic flow of goods in lorries and trains, the detection of this *modus operandi* may become more challenging and should not be underestimated.

■ **False documents**

Excluding the increase of detected false Swedish documents and, to a lesser extent, Syrian passports, which may be linked to the increased irregular entries by Syrian nationals, there were no major new phenomena as regards the use of false documents by non-regional migrants detected at the common land borders. Considering the widely reported use of forged EU documents by nationals of West and Central African countries the number of detections decreased sharply in 2013. It is likely that the increased cooperation between border authorities in identifying forged EU documents made this *modus operandi* increasingly unsuccessful.

■ **Abuse of legal travel channels**

Attempts to abuse legal travel channels, especially visa issuance, are regularly documented

by the Member States located at the eastern borders of the EU. Similar methods are also likely to be used in EB-RAN countries.

However, while these *modi operandi* are probably very commonly used to enter legally and then subsequently stay illegally in the EU, they are often not linked with common borders, which is the focus of this report.

In fact, at common borders and Member State borders with the Russian Federation the number of refusals reported by Member States for the non-regional migrants was just 429, which indicates a relatively low risk of abuse of legal travel channels by non-regional migrants (in contrast to regional migrants). It should, however, be noted that the number of refusals at the borders reveals only a part of the phenomenon, as it does not include persons that have been refused visas in Member States' consulates in EB-RAN countries or refused entry to international trains or ferries by transport companies, for example due to the lack of a valid visa.

According to EB-RAN experts, visa abuse cases tend to require a lot of effort from border authorities, for example, to verify claimed travel plans, supporting documentation etc.

3.2.3. Impact

Loss of life (increased illegal border-crossing in winter)

Attempts to cross the border illegally in winter time can be fatal, especially for persons who may not be fully aware of or prepared for the risks it includes as the death of a Sudanese national in January 2014 in Estonia proved.



Labour exploitation and trafficking of human beings (especially Vietnamese nationals)

In the EU, Vietnamese irregular migrants have been found working, for example, in nail bars, as gardeners in cannabis plantations and as couriers of methamphetamine. There is indeed an increased risk of trafficking in human beings accompanying the phenomenon of Vietnamese irregular migration through common borders. It should be noted that according to information received from Member States, the Vietnamese are among the nationalities most commonly detected as victims of human trafficking in the EU.

Time consuming second-line checks in visa abuse cases

Validating a long string of travel plans, work contracts etc. in second-line checks with limited availability of interpreters creates additional workload at BCPs.

3.2.4. Mitigation

Strengthening/creating contact points in order to ensure timely common responses in illegal border-crossing cases.

It was highlighted by experts of EB-RAN countries, especially Belarus, that creating and strengthening of contact points between EB-RAN countries and Member States border authorities facilitate timely common operational responses in illegal border-crossing cases.

Cooperation in investigations

Cooperation between neighbouring countries and with destination countries in ongoing investigations against facilitators/organised crime groups is vital, especially considering their increasing organisational flexibility. The same applies for cooperation between border authorities on falsified documents. Also the enhanced use of advance passenger information at BCPs, including cooperation with transport (railway, bus) companies would facilitate advance recognition of potential risk passengers.

3.3. Risk of sustained irregular migration flows from the EB-RAN region, including CIS countries and Georgia

3.3.1. Description of the threat

The threat of irregular migration flows originating from the EB-RAN region, including the Russian Federation, CIS countries and Georgia, contains a variety of different migration motives and *modi operandi*. This is natural due to the geographic proximity, large regular traffic flows and wide labour migration.

Although there are important variations between nationalities, the following main trends are clear: (a) the threat of illegal border-crossings for migration purposes remains relatively low, while (b) the threat of abuse of legal travel channels (asylum misuse, overstaying, obtaining visas under false pretences) is on a much higher level.

Even though the abuse of legal travel channels/entries may not be facilitated in the meaning that persons are guided through the border, individual parts of the journey of irregular migrants are facilitated starting from production of fraudulent supporting documents to taxi drivers arranging further intra-EU movements. As these facilitating acts are usually not connected with the time of actual border-crossing, they are challenging to identify and prosecute by border authorities.

New developments

■ Illegal border-crossing

Two main issues should be stressed when analysing the data on illegal border-crossing by regional migrants. First, it is clear that, in contrast to transiting non-regional migrants, illegal border-crossing of regional migrants is, in relative terms, less often connected with irregular migration, but rather with other,

usually economic, activities. Secondly, the data need to be read carefully as the reporting countries may still have different practices in reporting the purpose of the illegal border-crossing.

In 2013 the number of detected illegal border-crossings by regional migrants decreased slightly. Member States reported a 4% decrease (683 detections in 2013). Considering both sides of the common borders (with available data for Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine) there was also a 3% decrease (1 571 detections in 2013). Both abovementioned figures are in line with the gradually decreasing trend observed during the previous years that can be attributed to the widening legal travel channels and changes in *modi operandi* of irregular migration.

Considering the main entry points, the trend was relatively stable both at the Lithuanian-Belarusian border and the Slovakian-Ukrainian borders.

At regional borders the most affected border sections remained the Ukrainian-Moldovan and Ukrainian-Russian border sections, both seeing decreases of 28% and 10%, respectively. However, it should be reiterated that at the regional borders most cases of illegal border-crossing can be attributed to local inhabitants and are largely not connected with migration, but rather with smuggling activities, illegal logging, fishing or hunting. This also explains the fact that a great majority of the detected illegal border-crossings are made by the nationals of the countries sharing the border. For example, at the Belarusian-Ukrainian border, nationals of Belarus and Ukraine accounted for 95% of all detections of illegal border-crossing.

There were no major changes in *modus operandi* of illegal border-crossing observed in 2013. The border is usually crossed in small groups of 2–3 persons or individually. Regional



migrants rarely use facilitation (with the exception of Georgian nationals); they are prepared and equipped with maps, compasses, change of clothes and they are often able to communicate in Russian, which helps in making the journey without facilitators.

■ Abuse of legal travel channels

In contrast to the threat of illegal border-crossing, the magnitude of the threat of the abuse of legal travel channels is at a much higher level. The number of refusals of entry reported by Member States at common land borders reached 50 000 in 2013, mainly due to strong growth of refusals at the Polish land borders.

While a considerable part of the refusals were not necessarily connected with irregular migration (some were simply the result of accidental attempts to cross the border with expired visas, etc. with no intention of cheating border authorities), three major phenomena of abuse of legal travel channels at common borders stood out in 2013:

1. A sharp increase in nationals of the Russian Federation of Chechen origin using asylum applications in Poland as a way of entering the EU to travel further on to Germany with the intention to file another asylum application and subsequently overstay.
2. Continued flow of Georgian nationals to Poland and further on to other Member States using a variety of *modi operandi*.
3. Continued abuse of visas in order to work irregularly and/or overstay in other Member States than that stated in the visa, mainly by EB-RAN country nationals, especially Ukrainians.

Additionally there were other smaller phenomena reported by other regional CIS country nationals, mostly impacting regional borders.

In the first two cases the main entry point was the Polish-Belarusian border. However, there were some notable differences in the *modus operandi* used by different nationalities, mostly deriving from their different motives of attempting irregular entry.

a) Citizens of the Russian Federation

For irregular migrants from the Russian Federation the abuse of legal travel channels was clearly the main *modus operandi* to enter the EU irregularly. In 2013 there were just 147 Russian citizens detected for illegal border-crossing between BCPs reported by Member States at common land borders, including the land border with the Russian Federation, of which only 37 were connected with irregular migration. In contrast, roughly 20 000 refusals of entry were issued to Russian citizens at these borders (some Russians were refused more than once).

Despite the large magnitude of the threat of abuse of legal travel channels, the phenomenon in 2013 had a limited geographic and temporal scope: the sharp rise in refusals of entry issued to Russians was geographically constrained mostly to Poland. It peaked sharply in April–June and involved a specific group of Russian nationals originating from the North Caucasus region, mainly Chechnya.

The main entry point was clearly the Polish-Belarusian border: of the total number of almost 23 000 refused nationals of the Russian Federation at all EU borders, including air borders, over 60% were refused there. As Figure 10 shows, the rise in refusals at the land borders was mainly confined to the Polish-Belarusian border.

This in turn led to highly diverse refusal rates at different border sections, when the number of refusals is compared with the number of regular entries. In per capita terms the rate of refusals was a hundred times larger at the

Polish-Belarusian border than, for example, at the Estonian and Finnish borders with the Russian Federation.

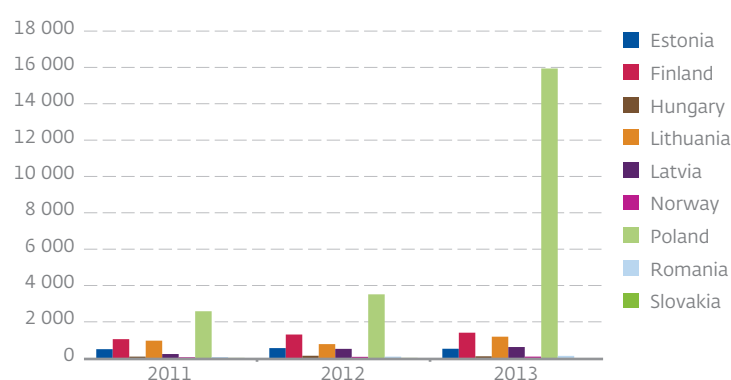
The rise of refusals at the Polish-Belarusian border was connected to the *modus operandi* and route of nationals of the Russian Federation of Chechen origin aiming to reach Germany and apply for asylum there. They usually travelled in family units and arrived at the Polish BCPs without valid visas. After being refused entry by Poland most of the migrants applied for asylum. However, after the start of the asylum procedure many of them quickly absconded from reception centres and continued towards Germany, thus using asylum application in Poland mainly as an entry method to the EU.

Once in Germany, most migrants applied for asylum once again, Eurodac hits confirming earlier fingerprinting in Poland. In fact, only 2% of the roughly 12 000 applicants of Russian citizenship got a positive decision by Germany in 2013. They were thus ordered to return to Poland, their first place of applying for asylum. However, many ignored this request and stayed in Germany, resulting in an increase in detections of illegal stay of Russian citizens detected in Germany.

The reasons behind this sudden and large increase are not fully understood. Although security and economic situation in Chechnya and Northern Caucasus region as a whole is in many ways problematic, no major changes in the politics, security or economy in the region can be identified that could have possibly acted as a sudden push factor triggering the flow. The fact that some persons were refused entry several times indicates that all migrants were not always aware of the asylum option when arriving at the BCP. This may point to a conclusion that the journey had not been strictly facilitated, but was more improvised in nature. Indeed, it is likely that the sudden increase in the flow was trig-

Figure 10. **Refusals of entry by Member States at common borders and land borders with the Russian Federation show a sharp increase at Polish borders in 2013 but fairly stable trend at other borders sections**

Refusals of entry issued to citizens of the Russian Federation by neighbouring Member States 2011-2013



Source FRAN data as of 10 February 2014

gered by rumours about Germany granting asylum to Chechens as well as about asylum applicants receiving basic benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act based on general provisions applicable to all persons who receive social benefits.

As regards the use of false documents, according to European Union-Document Fraud (EDF) data there was an increasing number of Russian citizens detected using false documents from 134 persons using false doc-

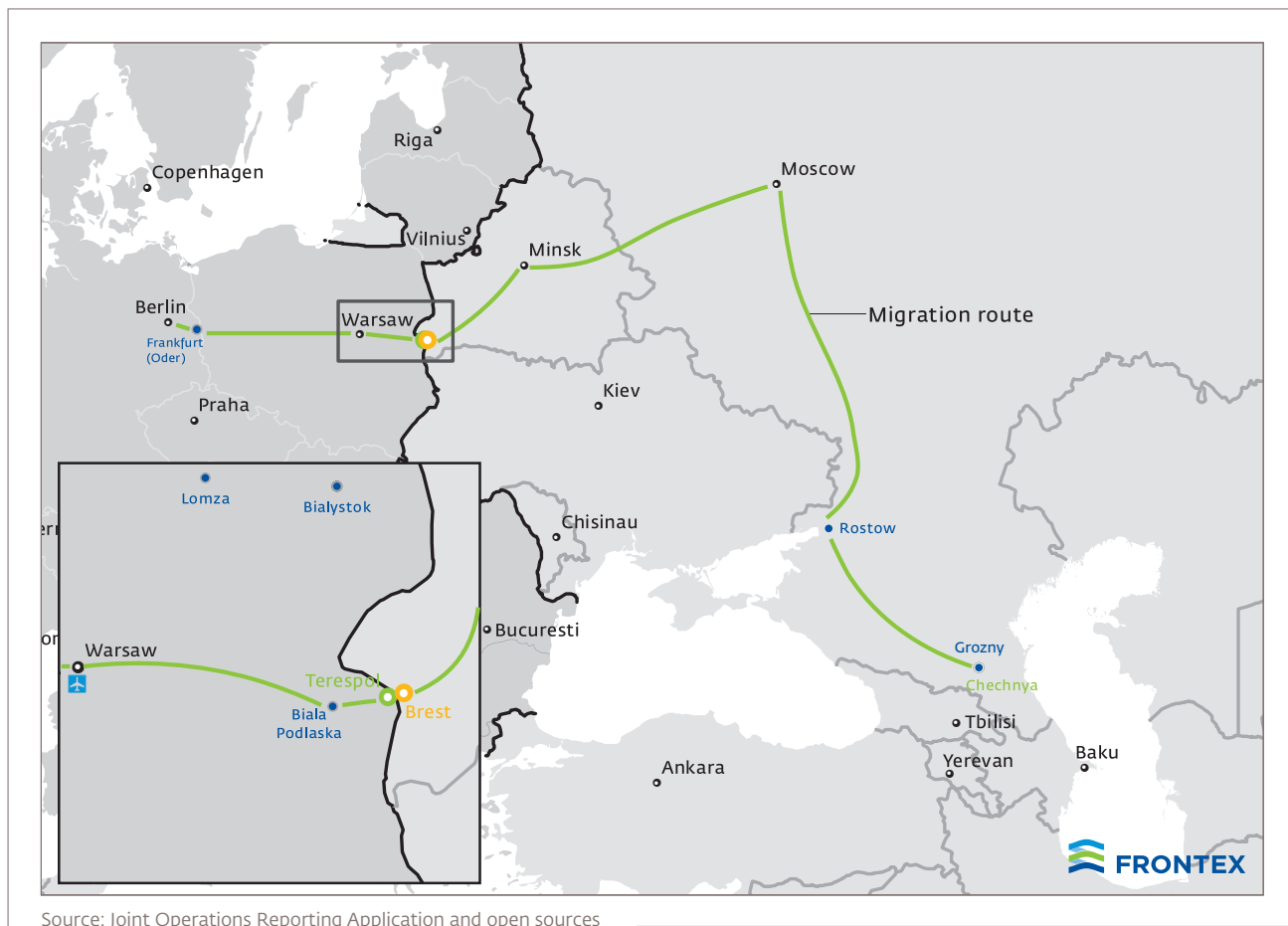


Figure 11. **Asylum reception centre in Białą Podlaska in eastern Poland**



Figure 12. **The main entry point to the EU by Russian citizens of Chechen origin was the Polish-Belarusian border**

Route from Chechnya to Poland and further on to Germany



uments in 2012 to 156 in 2013. However, in relation to the number of Russians crossing the border and those abusing asylum procedures, the number of false document users is relatively low.

b) Citizens of Georgia

The trends of refusals of entry and asylum requests by nationals of Georgia remained relatively stable compared with 2012. According to FRAN data, the number of refused Georgian nationals at all EU external borders decreased from 8 846 in

2012 to 8 100 in 2013. This was mainly due to fewer refusals issued at the Polish-Belarusian border. Despite the decrease in the number of refusals of entry at the Polish-Belarusian border, there were still far more refusals of entry than regular entries by Georgian nationals recorded at that border section in 2013.

Detections of illegal stay decreased too, falling to 3 973 persons detected in 2013 from 4 636 in 2012. The main Member States detecting Georgians on illegal stay were Germany and Sweden.

In contrast to developments at the EU borders, the number of Georgians refused entry by Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine increased by 51% from 414 in 2012 to 798 in 2013. The highest increase was reported at the Ukrainian-Belarusian border. The reasons for this increase may include changes in the Russian migration policy and/or migrants' preference for different routing towards Ukraine.

In general, the main *modus operandi* of Georgian nationals attempting irregular entry to the EU has remained unchanged in recent years. The journey generally includes three legs: (a) from Georgia to Belarus/Ukraine, with no need of visa; (b) to the BCP or green border; and (c) secondary movements inside the area of free movement in the EU.

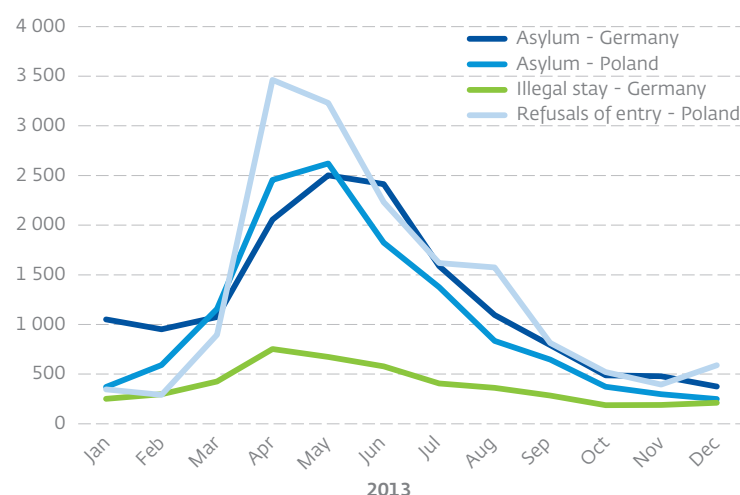
After reaching Belarus or Ukraine some travel by train to BCPs where they are usually refused entry due to the lack of visa. After refusal they either apply for asylum or attempt illegal border-crossing between BCPs mainly from Belarus to Lithuania. Alternatively, some travel straight from Minsk airport to the vicinity of Latvian or Lithuanian border in order to cross it illegally between BCPs.

According to EDF data there was an increase in the number of Georgians detected using false documents in 2013. In 2012 Member States reported 118 persons using false documents, while in 2013 this number rose to 182. However, these detections seem not to be connected with the phenomenon at the land borders, because the detections were made in other Member States. Passports were the most often reported type of false document used.

There seems to be an increased risk of links between irregular migration and Georgian organised crime in the EU. This concern was highlighted by the Belarusian authorities in connection with the amnesty in Georgia, where, according to the Belarusians, up to

Figure 13. Correlation between indicators on refusals of entry in Poland, asylum applications in Poland and Germany and detections of illegal stay by Germany of Russian citizens further corroborate the assumption of quick secondary movements from Poland to Germany

Asylum applications by citizens of the Russian Federation in Poland and Germany in 2013; detections of illegal stay of citizens of the Russian Federation by Germany in 2013; Refusals of entry issued to citizens of the Russian Federation by Poland in 2013



Source: FRAN data as of 10 February 2014



Figure 14. Georgian citizens detected for attempting illegal border-crossing from Ukraine to Slovakia

© Border Service of Ukraine



17 000 prisoners were released at the beginning of 2013. Open sources in Member States have also reported the growth of Georgian crime groups. However, a clear link with irregular migration and its facilitation cannot be established.

c) Citizens of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine

For EB-RAN country nationals the main *modus operandi* is to enter EU legally using visas issued by neighbouring countries and move to other Member States with the intention to overstay. However, the trend of detections was decreasing with Member States issuing 10% fewer refusals of entry to citizens of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine in 2013 at all EU external borders (21 861) compared with 2012 (24 313). The share of common borders, including borders with the Russian Federation, was roughly 20 000.

Ukrainian nationals were refused entry mostly by Poland (77%) and Hungary (12%) reflecting the large volume of regular traffic. At the Polish-Belarusian border, which was the hotspot for refusals issued to nationals of Russian Federation and Georgia, refusals issued to nationals of Belarus remained at a much lower level.

The issue of false supporting documentation for visa applications continued to be a threat. There are, for example, companies and individuals in Member States and Ukraine who, in exchange for money, provide visa applicants with necessary documents or even fictitious invitation letters. As mentioned already in the EB-ARA 2013 there is also a 'market' for supporting false documentation such as bank statements, employment status certificates or notary deeds in Ukraine.

It can be assessed that the majority of Member States are faced with such practices, which are fuelled by many legal limitations

to prosecuting 'visa traders'. Member States' consular authorities in Ukraine seek to counter visa fraud with strengthening the capacity of their staff at consular sections and improving the technical equipment needed to detect false documents.

Still, in 2013 Member States reported 7 788 refusals of entry at all external EU borders to nationals of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine due to lack of appropriate documentation justifying the purpose and conditions of stay, indicating a continuing abuse of visas. Overstaying the length of the visa period is also a common *modus operandi* to abuse visas. Of almost 17 000 (decrease from 18 591 in 2012) detected illegally staying Belarusians, Moldovans and Ukrainians, roughly 8 000 were detected on exit from the EU at external land, sea and air borders during 2013. The main locations of these detections remained the Polish-Ukrainian and Hungarian-Ukrainian border sections.

The use of false stamps is often linked with attempts to hide overstaying. According to EDF data, the number of detected false stamps decreased to 498 in 2013 from 616 in 2012, mainly detected in Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

In 2013 only 279 illegal border-crossings between BCPs of nationals of these three countries were reported by Member States at common borders including the borders with the Russian Federation. Moreover, only 122 were linked to migration purposes (89 by Moldovan nationals).

d) Other CIS-country nationals

Irregular migration of other CIS-country nationals such as Uzbeks and Tajiks tends to affect regional borders rather than common borders with Member States. Here the changes in migration regulations in the Russian Federation, which is the main destina-

tion country for migrants from Central Asian CIS countries, play an important role.

The new limitation of stay for foreigners entering the Russian Federation without a visa to no more than 90 days within a 180-day period is aimed to prevent labour migrants from indefinitely 'renewing' their legal 90-day stay in the Russian Federation by simply crossing the border and coming back. If this rule of stay will be strictly enforced, it might impact the situation especially at regional and, to a lesser extent, common borders in 2014.

3.3.2. Mitigation

As the most prevalent *modus operandi* is to abuse legal travel channels, mitigation include a combination of issues and measures at all tiers of the four-tier access control model, including visa issuance, cross-border cooperation, border controls and cooperation with asylum process and police authorities within the area of free movement.

Supporting consulates in visa issuance

In visa abuse cases the key mitigation measures are focused on the consulates issuing visas. They should be increasingly supported by liaison officers of border-control authorities experienced with detecting false documents and fraudulent supporting documents. This has proved to be a very cost effective method to mitigate the risk.

Information exchange between the consulates and BCPs in second-line checks should be also strengthened in order to create a similar situational picture.

Use of Visa Information System

The Visa Information System (VIS) is a system for the exchange of information on short-

stay visas between Member States. The VIS facilitates the exchange of data between Schengen states on visa applications in order to ease procedures, prevent 'visa shopping' and assist in the fight against fraud. The roll-out will continue throughout 2014, but definite dates have not yet been determined by the Council.

Increasing capacity of the asylum system

In the case of sudden large flows of people applying for asylum and then absconding, the capacity of the asylum centres as well as fast processing and evaluation of asylum applications is crucial. The same applies for double applications in Member States.

Exploring possibilities of compensatory controls at the internal borders

The implementation of compensatory controls at the internal borders of the EU is also a factor in mitigating the risk of secondary movements inside the EU area of free movement, especially in cases when there is a well-established irregular flow between the Member States. Cooperation with police authorities inside the area of free movements should be stressed.

Use of entry/exit systems

In mitigating the risk of overstaying, the implementation of planned entry/exit systems would increase the efficiency of border checks to detect overstay.

Media/information campaigns in third countries

Providing correct information about asylum procedure to contain the spread of rumours in third countries may discourage would-be migrants' to leave their countries of origin.



4. Outlook

4.1. Regular traffic

The long-term factors for growth of regular cross-border traffic are still valid. However, due to the economic slowdown in Ukraine and the Russian Federation, deepened further by the Ukrainian crisis, the potential for growth in 2014 is clearly weaker than in 2013 possibly leading to drop in the volume in regular traffic at some border sections.

However, the measures to increase the capacity of BCPs by improving infrastructure, technology and border check process should not be abandoned but on the contrary – further encouraged. This is especially important in terms of (a) roll-out of the Visa Information System when all Schengen Member States will be required to be able to carry out fingerprint verifications at all BCPs and also to issue VIS visas with biometric features at the border when necessary; and (b) possible further visa liberalisations between the EU and Eastern Partnership countries that would very likely significantly increase traffic flows as well as increase the responsibility of border checks in validating the conditions of entry.

4.2. Cross-border crime

Cross-border crime will remain a major challenge affecting both green borders and BCPs. Price differences and unemployment in the border areas will continue to make local-level smuggling of cigarettes and petrol an attractive source of income. However, legislative changes have proved to be an effective way to curtail these activities.

Smuggling of illicit drugs across common borders is becoming increasingly varied in re-

gards of the variety of products, directions and markets.

4.3. Irregular migration

The situation in important origin countries of non-regional migrants, such as Afghanistan and Syria, remains highly problematic, which will very likely lead to continued large refugee flows. Another factor impacting both regional and non-regional migrants are changes in migration policies and labour markets in the Russian Federation, possibly triggered by the economic downturn and western economic sanctions, which may also act as a push factor for migrants to leave the Russian Federation.

However, the impacts on common borders are much more difficult to assess as the geopolitical or economic developments have rarely directly correlated with the irregular migration flows in the region. Indeed, it is likely that, for example, the number of Syrian migrants attempting illegal border-crossing will increase in 2014, yet the magnitude of the threat will depend on several interlinked factors, such as changes in the use of other routes, prices of facilitation and the possibilities of entry to the CIS area. It is possible that the abuse of legal entry as a *modus operandi* may grow also among non-regional migrants.

The abuse of legal entries by migrants from the EB-RAN region is likely to continue. Sudden flows such as those experienced in 2013 are impossible to predict, but the risk of rumours being spread of a low-risk option to enter the EU remains valid. Changes of routes may lead to quickly increasing pressure at BCPs and on the asylum systems.

Considering the abuse of visas, increased support by border authorities to consular offices is needed especially before the roll-out of the VIS and implementation of Smart Borders package.

4.4. Ukrainian crisis

The impact of the Ukrainian crisis has emerged as the main uncertainty in the outlook for 2014 and beyond. The impact on irregular migration still depends on the rapidly evolving situation in Ukraine. So far the direct impact of the Ukrainian crisis on common borders has been limited to a slight increase in asylum applications by Ukrainian nationals. At the time of writing this report four possible developments impacting both regular and irregular migration flows could be identified: (a) further population movements from Crimea and Eastern Ukraine; (b) movements of third-country nationals out of Ukraine; (c) changes in directions of labour migration and (d) Russian passport issuance in Crimea increasing the number of persons holding two valid passports.

Population movements from Crimea are possible considering those persons who do not want to opt for Russian citizenship and passports that the Russian Federation has started to distribute. The main impact of these movements would most likely be limited to Ukraine, i.e. movements to the western parts of the country. Still, as sudden changes in the situation cannot be ruled out, for example, due to hostilities in the Eastern Ukraine, the bordering Member States have updated their contingency plans in case there would be significant flows of refugees from Ukraine.

If the general instability in Ukraine continues for a longer period of time, it may also increase the number of people intending to leave Ukraine to work abroad. Among the



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Figure 15. **Ukrainian border guards keep performing tasks on the entrance to the Crimean peninsula**

first likely to leave are migrant communities present in Ukraine including, for example, Somalis. This might lead to an increase in asylum requests in the EU and more illegal border-crossings.

As regards Ukrainian citizens, the continued instability in the country could lead to an increased risk of visa abuses and overstaying. Wider changes in directions of labour migration are also possible, for example, if visa-free travel between Ukraine and the Russian Federation is suspended. Vulnerable labour migrants could take more risks in taking work offers also from the irregular labour market.

The policy of the Russian Federation to quickly issue passports in Crimea is likely to lead to an increased number of persons with two valid passports thus increasing the risk of visa abuses. The integrity of the passport issuance process may not be taken for granted either, which additionally increases the risk of the use of Russian passports obtained under a false identity.



5. Statistical annex

Explanatory note

Detections reported for Member States for indicators Illegal border-crossing between BCPs, Illegal border-crossing at BCPs and Refusals of entry are detections at the common land borders on entry only. For Facilitators, detections at the common land borders on entry and exit are included. For Illegal stay, detections at the common land borders on exit only are included. For Asylum, all applications (land, sea, air and inland) are included.

For EB-RAN countries, all indicators – save for Refusals of entry – include detections (applications) on exit and entry at land, sea and air borders.

Each section in the table (reporting country, border type, place of detection, top five border sections and top ten nationalities) refers to total detections reported by EB-RAN countries and to neighbouring land border detections reported by Member States.

LEGEND

Symbols and abbreviations: n.a. not applicable
: data not available

Source: EB-RAN and FRAN data as of 10 February 2014, unless otherwise indicated

Note: 'Member States' in the tables refer to FRAN Member States, including both 28 EU Member States and three Schengen Associated Countries

Annex Table 1. Illegal border-crossing between BCPs

Detections reported by purpose of illegal border-crossing and top ten nationalities

	2011	2012	2013	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Purpose of Illegal Border-Crossing					
Other	:	:	1 898	40	<i>n.a.</i>
Irregular migration	:	:	1 565	33	<i>n.a.</i>
Not specified	5 772	5 299	661	14	-88
Smuggling	:	:	584	12	<i>n.a.</i>
Top Ten Nationalities					
Ukraine	2 023	1 475	1 318	28	-11
Moldova	1 384	937	691	15	-26
Georgia	544	645	686	15	6.4
Russian Federation	590	510	498	11	-2.4
Afghanistan	268	328	263	5.6	-20
Vietnam	42	193	209	4.4	8.3
Not specified	36	86	193	4.1	124
Belarus	266	198	163	3.5	-18
Syria	11	37	114	2.4	208
Somalia	201	342	73	1.6	-79
Others	407	548	500	11	-8.8
Total	5 772	5 299	4 708	100	-11

Annex Table 2. Illegal border-crossing at BCPs

Detections reported by purpose of illegal border-crossing and top ten nationalities

	2011	2012	2013	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Purpose of Illegal Border-Crossing					
Other	:	:	1 363	71	<i>n.a.</i>
Smuggling	:	:	355	19	<i>n.a.</i>
Irregular migration	:	:	180	9.4	<i>n.a.</i>
Not specified	2 750	2 236	10	0.5	<i>n.a.</i>
Top Ten Nationalities					
Ukraine	1 495	1 192	857	45	-28
Moldova	624	566	536	28	-5.3
Tajikistan	90	53	95	5.0	79
Russian Federation	139	98	85	4.5	-13
Romania	77	73	62	3.2	-15
Kyrgyzstan	81	34	49	2.6	44
Not specified	29	24	43	2.3	79
Belarus	37	43	28	1.5	-35
Afghanistan	1		11	0.6	<i>n.a.</i>
Poland	9	11	11	0.6	0
Others	168	142	131	6.9	-7.7
Total	2 750	2 236	1 908	100	-15



Annex Table 3. **Facilitators**

Detections reported by place of detection and top ten nationalities

	2011	2012	2013	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Place of Detection					
Land	160	124	69	96	-44
Inland	0	0	3	4.2	n.a.
Sea	0	2	0		n.a.
Air	6	9	0		n.a.
Top Ten Nationalities					
Belarus	3	4	13	18	225
Ukraine	53	53	13	18	-75
Moldova	13	10	9	13	-10
Russian Federation	17	14	8	11	-43
Poland	10	6	6	8.3	0
Vietnam	5	0	4	5.6	n.a.
Tajikistan	1	1	4	5.6	300
Lithuania	20	7	3	4.2	-57
Not specified	1	4	2	2.8	-50
Turkey	6	3	2	2.8	-33
Others	37	33	8	11	-76
Total	166	135	72	100	-47

Annex Table 4. **Illegal stay**

Detections reported by place of detection and top ten nationalities

	2011	2012	2013	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Place of Detection					
Land	20 449	24 176	23 952	58	-0.9
Air	11 809	14 013	16 083	39	15
Inland	613	678	863	2.1	27
Sea	565	568	303	0.7	-47
Between BCPs	867	699	137	0.3	-80
Not specified	0	0	1	0	n.a.
Top Ten Nationalities					
Ukraine	6 115	6 883	8 159	20	19
Russian Federation	5 842	7 051	6 887	17	-2.3
Georgia	4 976	4 187	4 938	12	18
Uzbekistan	1 581	2 889	2 879	7.0	-0.3
Azerbaijan	1 384	2 345	2 261	5.5	-3.6
Armenia	1 480	1 677	1 737	4.2	3.6
Moldova	2 538	2 139	1 707	4.1	-20
Belarus	1 232	1 534	1 487	3.6	-3.1
Turkey	777	1 359	1 455	3.5	7.1
China	713	700	913	2.2	30
Others	7 665	9 370	8 916	22	-4.8
Total	34 303	40 134	41 339	100	3.0

Annex Table 5. Refusals of entry

Refusals reported by border type and top ten nationalities

	2011	2012	2013	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Border Type					
Land	52 813	62 463	77 100	91	23
Air	2 657	2 690	4 485	5.3	67
Sea	3 073	3 184	3 344	3.9	5.0
Top Ten Nationalities					
Russian Federation	7 506	9 226	22 977	27	149
Ukraine	16 303	19 182	19 685	23	2.6
Georgia	4 169	9 640	9 643	11	0
Lithuania	3 942	5 259	5 372	6.3	2.1
Belarus	5 947	4 972	4 450	5.2	-10
Moldova	5 387	3 608	3 659	4.3	1.4
Uzbekistan	1 930	1 169	2 375	2.8	103
Armenia	1 014	1 217	1 901	2.2	56
Tajikistan	825	1 889	1 588	1.9	-16
Not specified	793	1 085	1 012	1.2	-6.7
Others	10 727	11 090	12 267	14	11
Total	58 543	68 337	84 929	100	24

Annex Table 6. Applications for asylum

Applications for international protection reported by top ten nationalities

	2011	2012	2013	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Top Ten Nationalities					
Russian Federation	5 074	6 801	13 499	26	98
Kosovo*	483	519	6 609	13	1173
Afghanistan	2 438	2 936	3 661	6.9	25
Syria	523	1 212	3 479	6.6	187
Pakistan	484	966	3 450	6.5	257
Eritrea	1 266	1 224	3 404	6.4	178
Somalia	2 767	2 745	2 208	4.2	-20
Georgia	2 363	3 900	1 690	3.2	-57
Algeria	719	901	1 337	2.5	48
Nigeria	376	530	1 194	2.3	125
Others	7 702	8 997	12 307	23	37
Total	24 195	30 731	52 838	100	72

* 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



Annex Table 7. **Document fraud**

Document fraud by place of detection, type of document, top ten nationalities and top ten countries of issuance

	2011	2012	2013	Share of total	% change on prev. year
Place of Detection					
Land	193	139	135	57	-2.9
Air	135	96	102	43	6.3
Sea	8	1	1	0.4	0
Type of Document					
Passport	248	189	200	84	5.8
Not specified	60	26	20	8.4	-23
Identity card	12	8	10	4.2	25
Visa	13	10	5	2.1	-50
Residence permit	3	3	3	1.3	0
Top Ten Nationalities					
Ukraine	139	91	99	42	8.8
Moldova	47	33	44	18	33
Georgia	36	23	15	6.3	-35
Russian Federation	11	7	11	4.6	57
India	1	0	8	3.4	n.a.
Turkey	20	12	7	2.9	-42
Afghanistan	2	2	6	2.5	200
Nigeria	3	3	5	2.1	67
Syria	3	7	4	1.7	-43
Armenia	10	13	4	1.7	-69
Others	64	45	35	15	-22
Top Ten Countries of Issuance					
Ukraine	122	76	86	36	13
Not specified	60	27	21	8.8	-22
Romania	22	17	19	8	12
Israel	10	2	15	6.3	650
Lithuania	11	8	11	4.6	38
Moldova	10	8	10	4.2	25
Russian Federation	5	4	8	3.4	100
Uzbekistan	3	0	8	3.4	n.a.
Turkey	14	13	7	2.9	-46
United Kingdom	1	3	7	2.9	133
Others	78	78	46	19	-41
Total	336	236	238	100	0.8



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