
Migration: Frontex, increase in illegal border crossings in 2021. Central Mediterranean is most-used route

In 2021, almost 200,000 people illegally crossed the EU borders - the highest number since 2017. These data are from Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, which reports an increase of 36% compared with 2019 and of 57% compared with 2020, when the lockdowns were having an impact on the mobility of desperate people. Frontex reports that “the situation at the borders to Belarus” caused arrivals to soar in 2021: 7,915 people were intercepted in the territories bordering Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. Among the peoples hoping for a better future in the EU are Syrians, followed by Tunisians, Moroccans, Algerians and Afghans. Women account for less than 10%. The share of minors and unaccompanied minors remained stable. The most-used route remains the Central Mediterranean route, which was chosen by one-third of all the people who illegally crossed the EU borders (65,362); compared with 2020, there has been an 83% increase in arrivals from the Libyan, Tunisian and Turkish shores. The largest numbers of migrants who attempted this route were Tunisians, along with Egyptians (a sevenfold increase compared with 2020) and Bangladeshis. On the Western Balkans route, 60,540 people were intercepted (a 125% increase compared with the previous year), while the number of people who attempted crossing into Europe via the Western Mediterranean route remained stable (18,254).

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