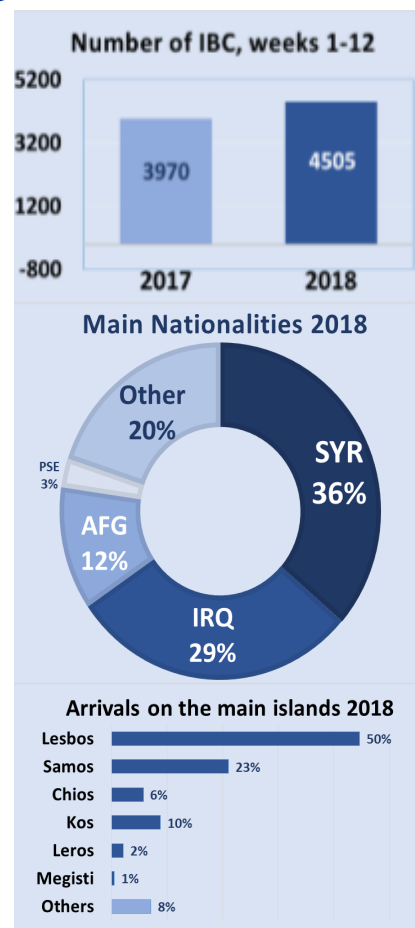


12 -25 March 2018 (weeks 11- 12), Ref. 6471/2018

28 March 2018

DETECTIONS OF ILLEGAL BORDER-CROSSING



Key points

- **4 505 irregular migrants** were apprehended in the first 12 weeks of 2018; this is a 12% increase compared with the same period of 2017 (3 970 apprehensions).
- In **weeks 11 -12 of 2018**, **908 migrants** were registered, which equates to a **4% decrease** compared with the same period of 2017 (945 arrivals) and a **12% increase** compared with **weeks 9 - 10 of 2018** (803 arrivals).
- **Turkey** detected and intercepted (third-country actions) roughly **460 would-be migrants** in the period under review.
- About 10% of the checked documents upon arrival by Greek authorities and FRONTEX personnel, were identified either false or stolen.
- Migrants argue that a protracted stay on a Greek island is preferable over remaining in Turkey due to the availability of social services, financial aid and subsequent employment opportunities in Greece (source EXOP).
- 200 migrants were prevented from leaving Turkey as a result of a combined operation between TCG and Jandarma.



Main trends

In the first 12 weeks of 2018, a total of 4 505 irregular migrants were apprehended. This equates to an 12% increase compared with the same period in 2017 when 3 970 irregular migrant apprehensions were reported.

In weeks 11 - 12 of 2018, 908 irregular migrants were apprehended in 22 incidents; this equates to a 12% increase compared with weeks 9 - 10 (803 arrivals). The current trend in arrivals in operational areas 'J' and 'K' is heavily influenced by weather conditions and the level of patrolling carried out by the Turkish authorities.

In both weeks under analysis, the weather conditions were not particularly favourable for sea crossings in the northern part of the Eastern Aegean (near Lesbos, Chios and Samos Islands); slightly better in week 11. The number of arrivals reduced nearly be half in the subsequent week; (586) in week 11 and (322) week 12.

The migrants tried to cross the Aegean sea whenever the weather conditions improved offering a window of opportunity. There has been a continued decreasing trend in

terms of monthly arrivals which has been consistent since September 2017 through the first months in 2018. Nevertheless, by seasonality (Fig.1) an increase can be expected.

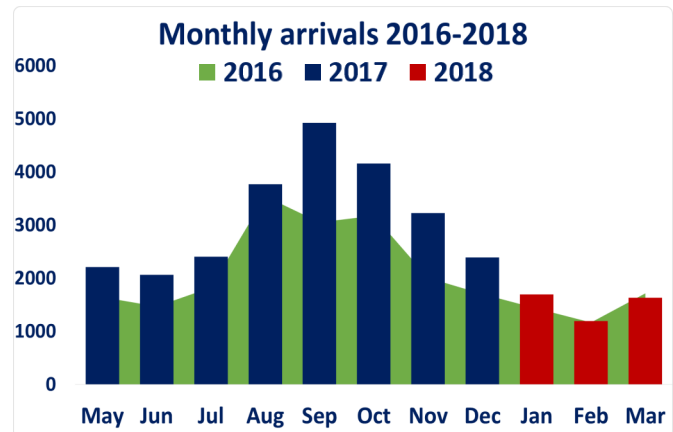


Figure 1: Decrease in the monthly trend of arrivals since September 2017.

The Turkish Coast Guard has been actively patrolling the departure areas during the reporting period. In weeks 11 and 12, Turkey announced the prevention of departure of 460 would be migrants (third-country actions), while the Hellenic authorities did not report any detections to the Turkish authorities (Fig.2). Since January they have already intercepted 6 779 migrants; of them, 790 have been detected by the Hellenic Coast Guard or the assets deployed by Frontex. Additionally, the Turkish Land Forces announced 8 594 apprehensions along the Turkish-Syrian land border (Weeks 11 -12). It must be noted that these figures cannot be interpreted as the full pressure along that border, because in many cases migrants are detected but not apprehended or processed, meaning that multiple attempts of the same persons may occur even the same day.

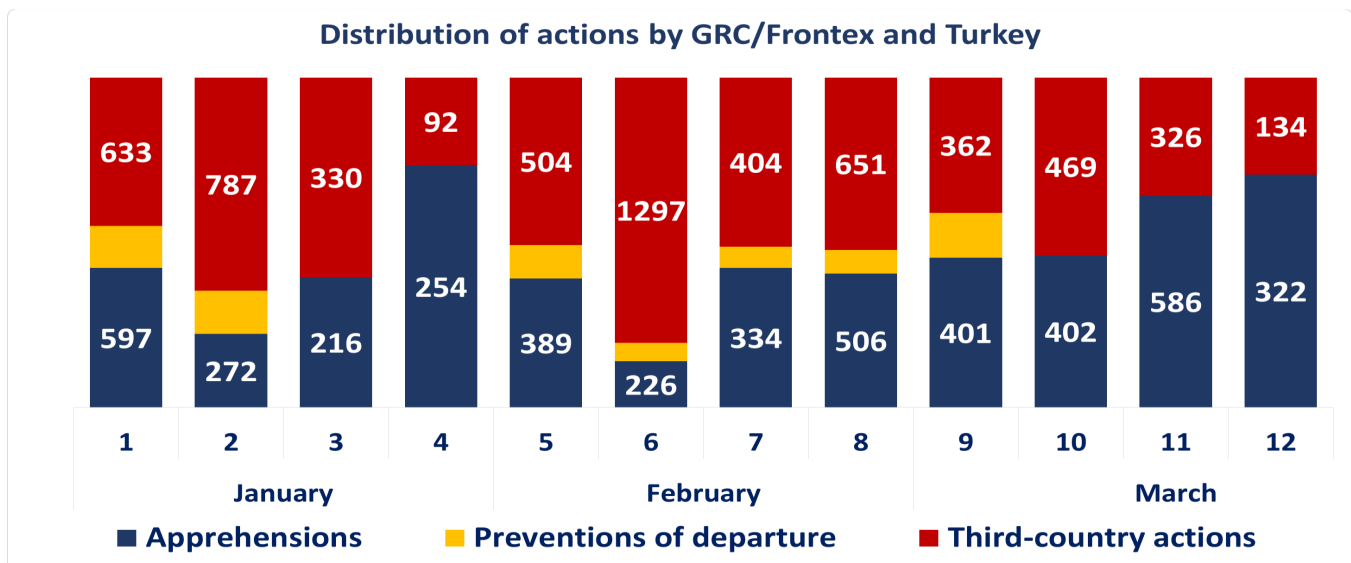


Figure 2: Chart showing the weekly distribution of actions of the Greek and Turkish authorities since January 2017

Main nationalities

In weeks 11 - 12, 47% of the detected migrants were Syrian nationals (428 persons), followed by Iraqi (24%, 222 persons) and Afghan (8%, 69 persons).

The table in Figure 3 shows changes regarding the arrival of the top nationalities, in biweekly timeframes, from weeks 1-2 to weeks 11-12. While there were no major changes recorded for the main nationalities SYR and IRQ nationals,

it should be mentioned that increase in number of XXA/KWT is only indicative as persons who claim to be stateless from Kuwait are identified to have a different nationality at a later stage in the screening process.

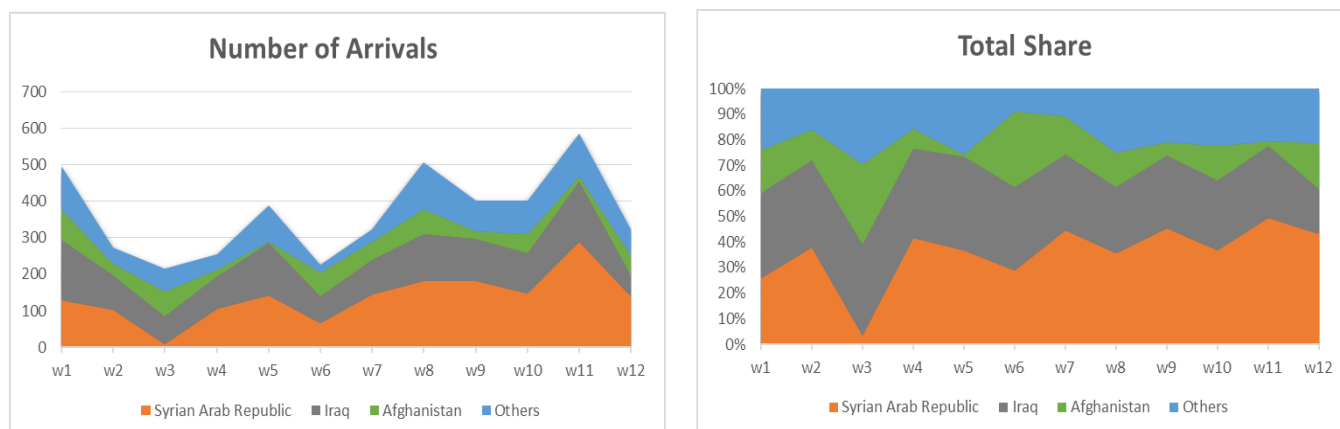
Figure 3: Chart showing the biweekly trend in arrivals of the top nationalities of apprehended migrants

Nationality	week 01-02	week 03-04	week 05-06	week 07-08	week 09-10	week 11-12	Trend
SYR	231	105	208	325	330	428	
IRQ	260	110	217	225	224	222	
PAK	6	0	0	0	0	0	
AFG	115	88	70	118	74	69	
XXA/KWT	24	21	12	19	0	50	
PSE	11	9	24	32	10	33	
DZA	20	5	9	22	11	10	
IRN	15	110	6	12	31	8	
MAR	13	5	6	6	1	7	
Others	174	55	63	81	122	81	

The graphs in figure 4 illustrate the weekly number of arrivals of the main nationalities and the proportional share in percentage. In terms of main nationalities, thus far in 2018 36% of the apprehended migrants have been SYR nationals, followed by IRQ (29%) and AFG (12%). In February Syrian nationals were on top followed by Iraqi nationals, which kept consistent also in March without any change in pattern. In March 714 Syrian migrants were registered a 62% increase compared to February 445. The number of Iraqi migrants also increased at a lower rate by 15% (352 in February and 411 in March). Notably, the number of arrivals of nationalities from different East and West Africans has slightly increased in March when compared to February

In 2018, 50% of the migrants have been registered on Lesbos, 23% on Samos, 10% on Kos and 6% on Chios. While in February Lesbos registered 42% of the migrants, in March the percentage went up to 56%. Meanwhile, in February and March, Samos reported 33% and 14%, respectively. Notably, the share of Kos was nearly 20% in February, and in March it dropped down to 8%. According to operational information, the highest number of migrants apprehended in weeks 11 - 12 in operational area 'J' was registered on Lesbos: 570 migrants. The main nationalities were: SYR (321), IRQ (76), AFG (68) and others (105). There were no arrivals reported in In operational area 'K'.

Figure 4: Graphs showing the monthly number of arrivals and total share of the main nationalities.



Main findings

Forged and Counterfeit Documents

The majority of irregular migrants who reach Greece aim to travel further north to other EU countries either once they get the necessary documents or after procuring fake travel documents (Fig.5). The latter type of documents are either purchased in Turkey prior to their departure or otherwise bought at a later stage on the Greek Islands or on the Mainland. Greece is mostly considered by the migrants as a stepping stone, and for some an opportunity to earn some money before continuing their journey to western and northern Europe, especially Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Figure 5: About 10% of the checked documents upon arrival, result to be either false or stolen



However, leaving Greece is not as easy as most of the migrants have been told or anticipated. It often takes several months and there are some migrants who lost hope of leaving Greece after a number of failed attempts to leave the country with forged passports and identity cards.

Some migrants believe that to obtain a refugee passport instead of an ordinary one issued by any EU member state is more advantageous since a person who does not speak the language of the issuing state of the document would raise immediate suspicion to the authorities.

In 2018 (weeks 1-11) there was an **increase of migrants trying to fly from Greece to other EU MS/SAC airports with fraudulent documents** in comparison with the same period in 2017. In 2017 106 persons were detected while in 2018 a total of **256 persons were stopped on exit at Greek airports** (largely SKG and ATH - 142 and 106 respectively) on their attempt to fly **mostly to Germany** and, to a lesser extent, to the Netherlands.

Monthly Social Media

As mentioned in the latest report prepared by EXOP in reference to the social media activities conducted by Arabic-speaking individuals and groups discussing issues related to migration to Europe, the following extracts are

some of the conclusions related to the East Mediterranean Route:

Major Relevant Developments: Sea routes to Greece, especially those to the **Greek islands**, continue to be viewed with skepticism in the analysed Arabic-language social media due to the **delay in reaching the European mainland**. Yet, many migrants argue that a protracted stay on a Greek island is preferable over remaining in Turkey due to the availability of social services, financial aid and subsequent employment opportunities in Greece.

Sea Routes to Greece: Smugglers continue to offer sea routes from Turkey's **Antalya Province to Kastellorizo Island** and from **Muğla Province to Kos**. Occasionally, routes to the islands of Chios and Lesbos figure in social media as well. Prices range between 500 and 1,600 EUR depending on the type of vessel. Frequently, discounts are offered to specific traveler categories or to groups and families. In one case, a 50 per cent discount was offered for children under the age of 10, while children under the age of five were offered free passage.

Advice on behavior as a Migrant with Forged Documents: In social media groups which focus on document provision, migrants occasionally post recommendations regarding behaviour as a migrant who lacks identity documents or who holds only forged documents. Among these recommendations are: avoid gatherings in public places, prefer car over bus travel, adopt a respectful approach to neighbours, avoid falsifying other documents, avoid staying near mosques after prayers, avoid harassing women and avoid walking in groups and talking loudly.

TCG intercept 165 irregular migrants

Turkish Coast Guard detected in the Province of Mersin, a wooden boat (Fig.6) carrying 165 Syrian irregular migrants, including 72 males, 30 females, 63 children. While the operation was ongoing, the TCG informed the Jandarma, the authority responsible for land operations. In connection to this incident, road controls were set up in the regional area of Mersin where a suspicious truck was stopped with 27 irregular Syrian migrants (14 males, 11 females, 2 children).



Figure 6: Wooden boat 'ALBATROS-S' intercepted by TCG (source FRONTEX FLO Ankara)

Annex: Statistics weeks 11-12 (12 - 25 March 2018)

In 2018 (1 January - 25 March 2018)	
117	Incidents related to irregular migration occurred.
4 505	Irregular migrants were apprehended.
	Main nationalities: SYR (1 635), IRQ (1 313), AFG (534) and XXA/KWT (126).
18	Incidents on prevention of departure, with an estimated 790 would-be migrants at sea.
32	People smugglers were arrested.
12	Smugglers of goods were arrested.
10	Persons were refused entry.
16	Fatalities were reported.
55	SAR operations, involving the rescue of 2 093 persons.
2 476	Persons were saved by Frontex-deployed assets (60% of the total rescued).
	The main landing points: Lesbos (2 233), Samos (1 052), Kos (442), and Chios (287).
44%	Of the migrants were detected in land, 56% at sea.
	The Reporting Points (secondary movements towards Italy) reported 466 incidents involving 1 141 irregular migrants and 38 people smugglers. Two persons attempted to avoid border control, 163 persons were involved in document fraud, and 892 clandestine migrants were apprehended.
From the beginning of the operation on 1 February to 25 March 2018	
87	Incidents related to irregular migration occurred (85 in operational area 'J' and 2 in operational area 'K').
2 816	Irregular migrants were apprehended.
	The main nationalities: SYR (1 159), IRQ (763), AFG (328), and PSE (85).
8	Incidents on prevention of departure, with an estimated 400 would-be migrants at sea.
18	People smugglers were arrested.
4	Smugglers of goods were arrested.
8	Person was refused entry.
34	SAR operations, involving the rescue of 1 504 persons.
	The main landing points: Lesbos (1410), Samos (627), Kos (373), Leros (78) and Chios (107)
During the reporting period 12 - 25 March 2018 (weeks 11 - 12)	
22	Incidents related to irregular migration occurred.
908	Irregular migrants were apprehended.
	Main nationalities: SYR (428), IRQ (222), AFG (69) and XXA/KWT (50).
	No Incidents on prevention of departure of would-be migrants at sea.
2	People smugglers were arrested.
	No Person was refused entry.
7	SAR operations were launched, involving the rescue of 385 persons.
	The main landing points: Lesbos(570),Kos (122), RU Agathonisi (114), Chios(58) and RU Megisiti (27).
	The Reporting Points (secondary movements towards Italy) reported 54 incidents involving 121 irregular migrants and 2 people smugglers. 19 person attempted to avoid border control, 19 persons were involved in document fraud, and 92 clandestine migrants were apprehended.

Disclaimer: all the figures in this report including those in the tables and charts are based on data extracted from the Joint Operation Reporting Application (JORA) as of 26 Mar 2018, at 15:00 hrs and are subject to change due to the continuous processing of incidents. Statistics related to Turkish actions are sourced from Turkish Coast Guard publications.