

EN

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Answer given by Mr Brunner
on behalf of the European Commission
(11.9.2026)

Irregular border crossings along the Western Balkan route have decreased significantly in recent years, including by 41% in 2025 compared to 2024. This reflects stronger border management, close operational cooperation with Western Balkan partners, and EU measures under the Action Plan on the Western Balkans¹.

The Commission takes note of the concerns raised regarding Gorizia and Trieste. Under Regulation (EU) 2019/1896², the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) already supports Member States and Western Balkan partners through joint operations and standing corps deployments based on existing status agreements, including with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Work is ongoing to revise Frontex mandate, with the aim of strengthening cooperation with third countries, while fully respecting Member States' primary responsibility for border control.

Efforts to reduce irregular crossings rely on range of tools: including the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol)'s European Centre Against Migrant Smuggling³, the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT)⁴, and Frontex deployments. Visa policy alignment and effective border management, supported by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance III and other EU instruments, remain key elements of both the Western Balkans Action Plan and to accession-related conditionality.

Support to frontline Member States, including Italy, is provided through Frontex operations, European Union Agency for Asylum roadmaps, and targeted funding for border management and migration systems. These measures aim to help national and local authorities address migratory pressure while upholding fundamental rights and complying with EU obligations.

¹ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/Western%20Balkans_en.pdf.

² OJ L 295, 14.11.2019, pp. 1–131; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1896/oj/eng>.

³ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/about-europol/european-centre-against-migrant-smuggling-ecams>.

⁴ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/law-enforcement-cooperation/empact-fighting-crime-together_en.