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Greece's illegal immigration issue: Situation Analysis

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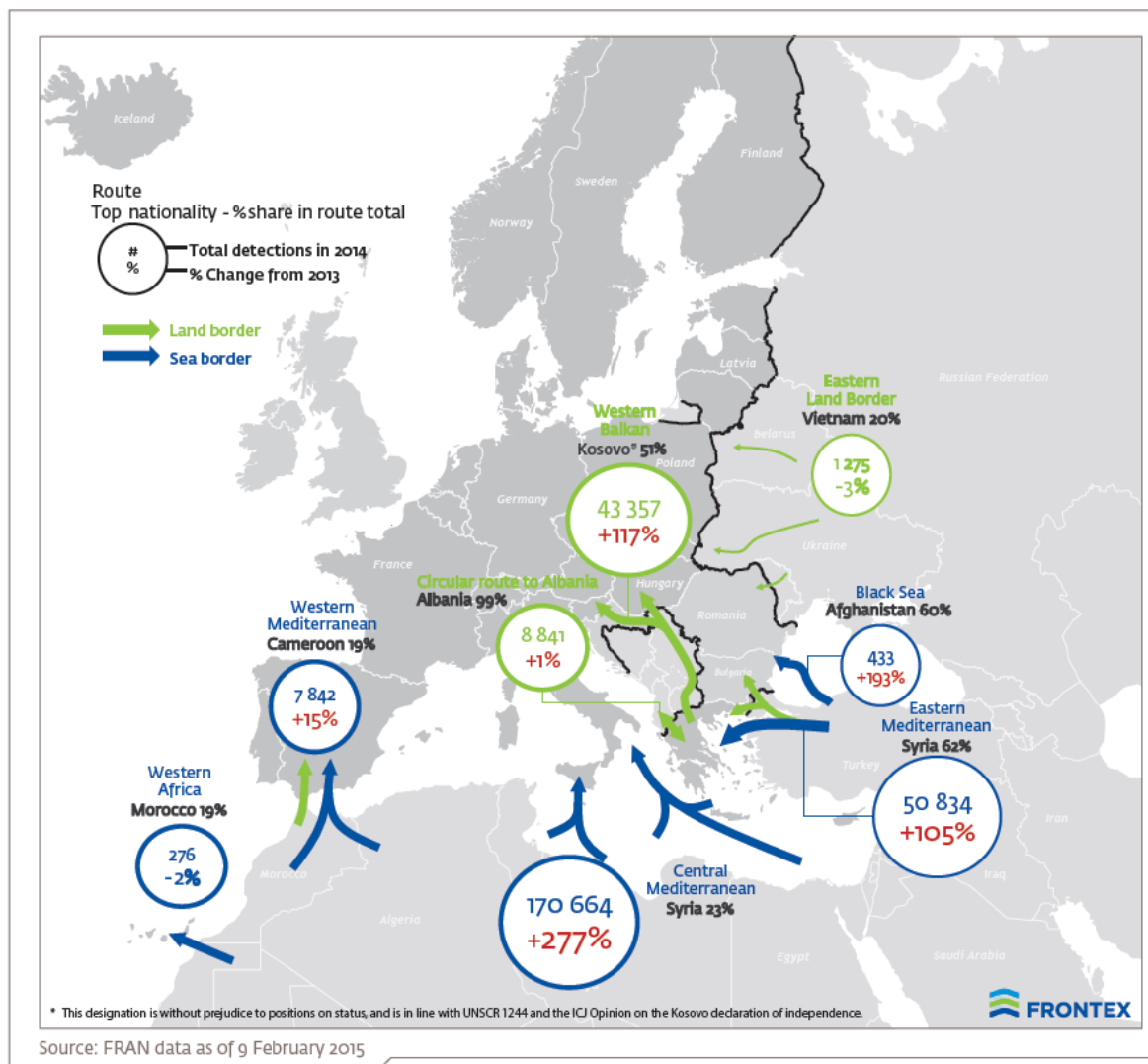
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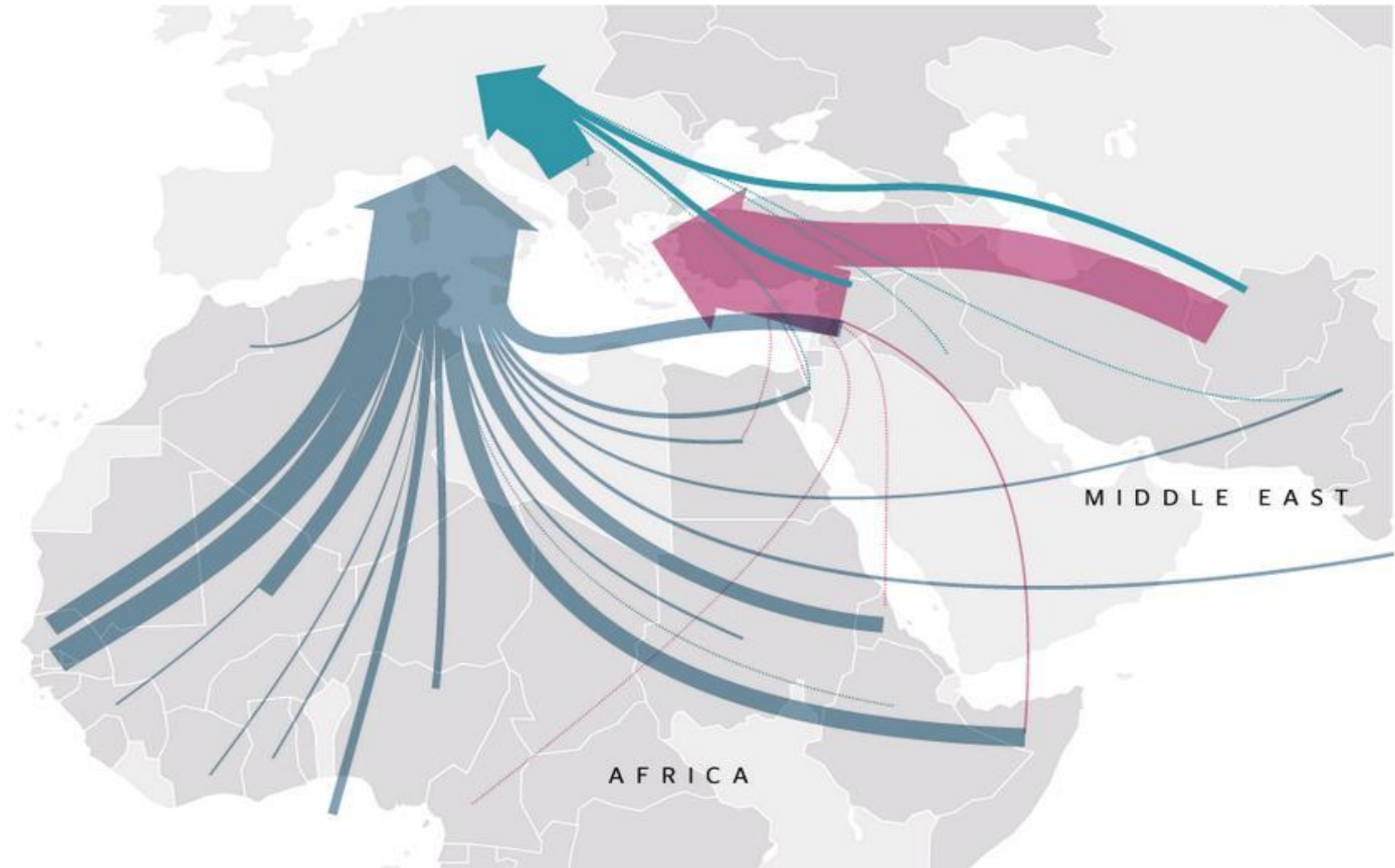
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Figure 4. **Detections of illegal border-crossing in 2014 with percentage change on 2013, by route**

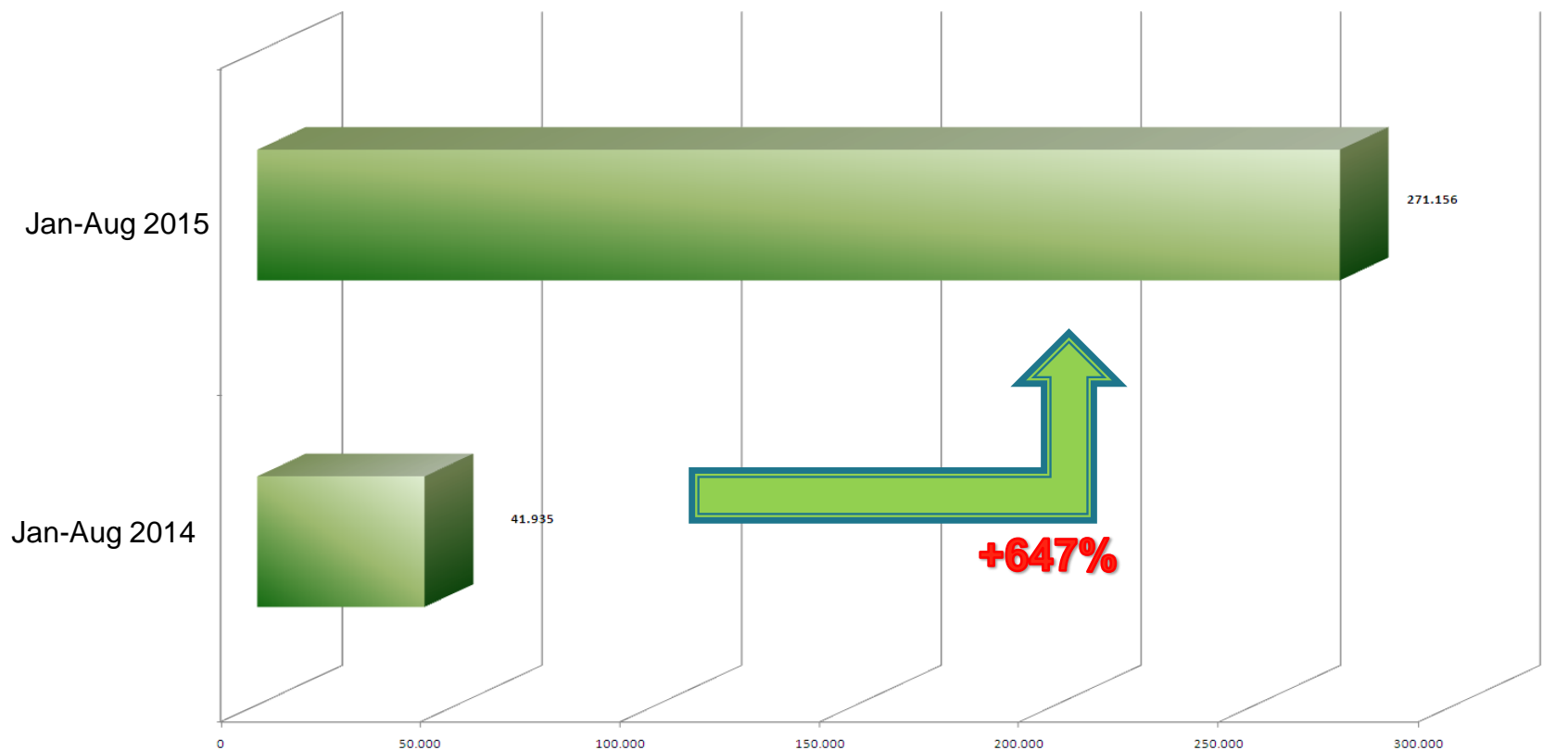


And a more recent view indicating the countries of origin and the comparative volume of the flows



The inflow of illegal immigrants

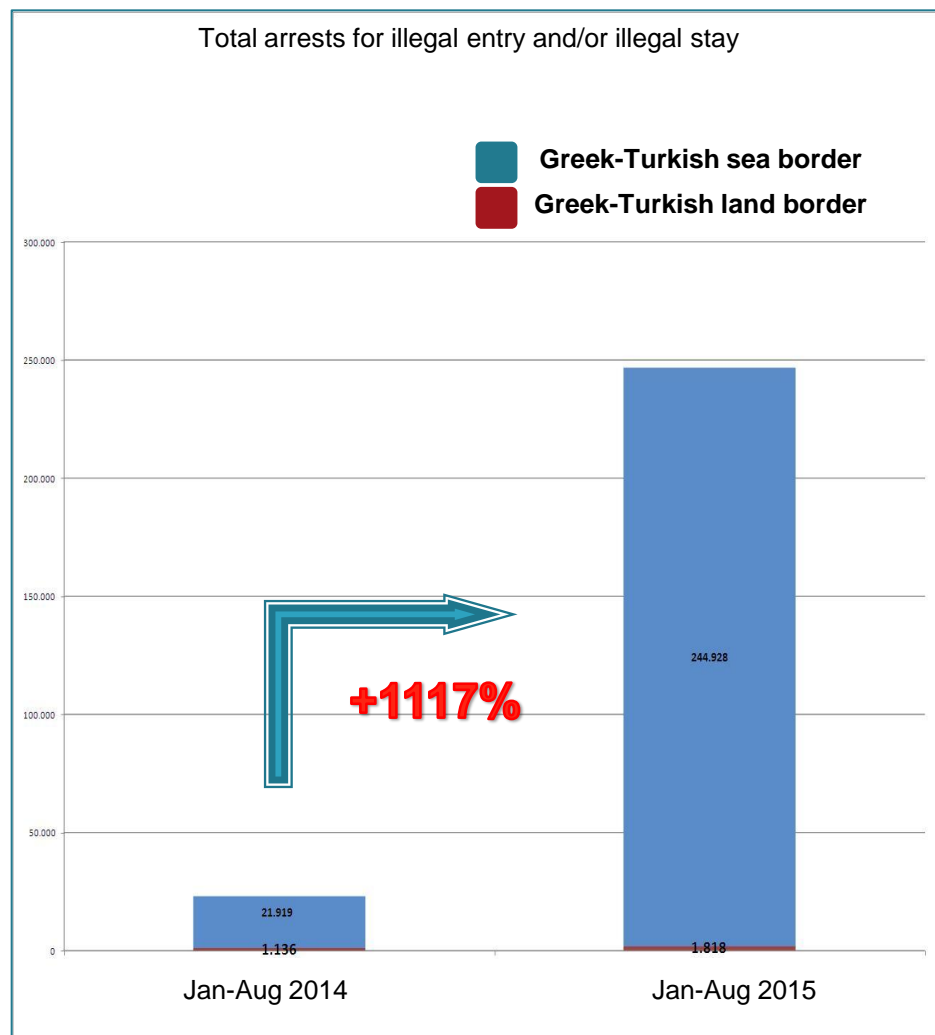
Total arrests for illegal entry and/or illegal stay



Source: Hellenic Police data

The main point(s) of entry...

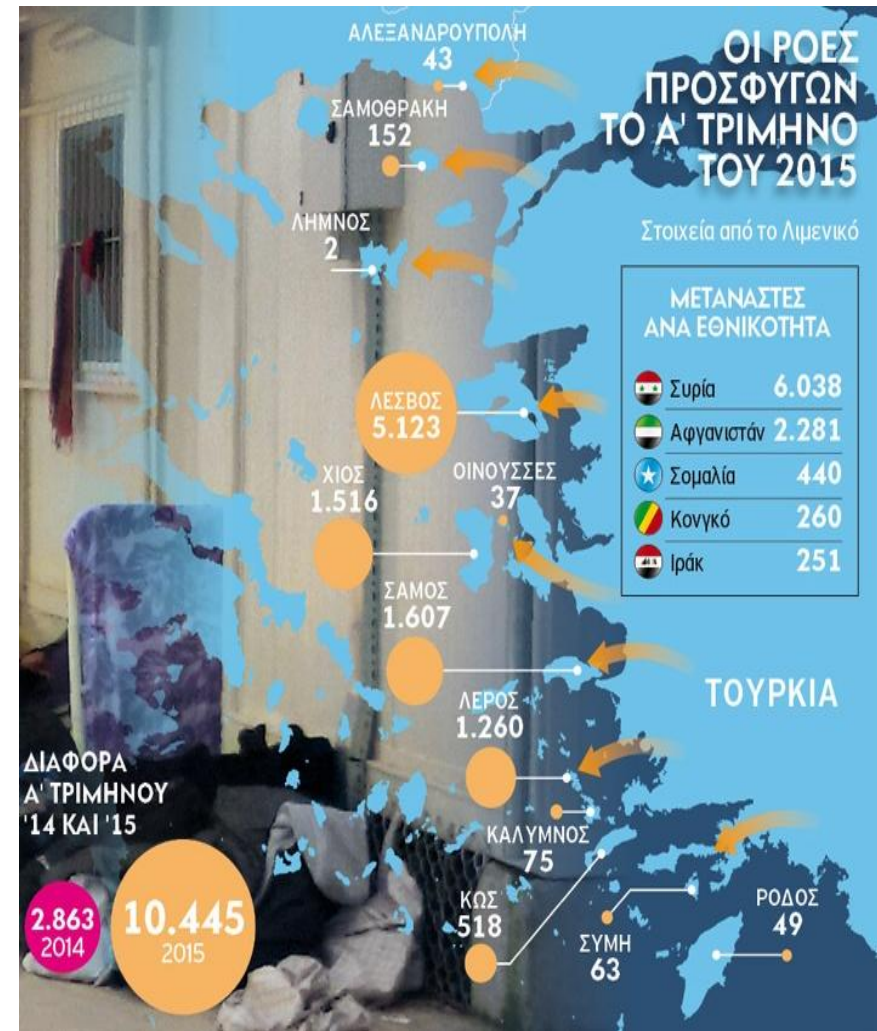
- ▶ The vast majority of the inflow comes from the Greek–Turkish sea border (90.3% of total)
- ▶ 2.1% comes from the Greek–Albanian land border
- ▶ 1.1% comes from the Greek–Turkish land border



Source: Hellenic Police data

Could this have been anticipated?

- ▶ Yes!
- ▶ The inflow of illegal immigrants through the sea-border with Turkey more than tripled in Q1 2015 compared to the same period of 2014 (10,445 vs 2,863). This initial trend should have alarmed the Greek government which, in turn, should have been better prepared for the inflow that followed.



How many are the refugees? (i)

- ▶ Their number has increased compared to last year but their absolute number remains unclear.
- ▶ Out of the 271,156 people arrested for illegal entry and/or illegal stay in Greece during the period from January to August 2015, 64.7% claimed to be Syrian and 18.5% from Afghanistan.
- ▶ As Frontex notes in its Annual Risk Analysis for 2015 “*Many migrants claimed to be Syrian, and were thus handed an administrative notice allowing them to stay in Greece for up to six months, even without applying for asylum. Screening processes of some migrants revealed a high degree of falsely claimed nationalities to avoid return*” (p. 20)
- ▶ Furthermore, Frontex points out that “*The presence of the screening teams also has a preventive effect...In 2014, out of the total of 18 662 migrants arriving in Lesbos and Samos, two islands with screening teams, 36% declared to be Syrians. By contrast, over the same period, out of 14 802 migrants reported in the islands of Kalymnos, Kos, Leros, Limnos, Patmos, Rhodes and Symi, seven islands without screening teams, 86% declared being from Syria*” (p. 21).

How many are the refugees? (ii)

- ▶ According to the latest data of the Hellenic Asylum Service, in the period from January to July 2015, 7,469 asylum applications were submitted [The arrests for illegal entry and/or illegal stay during the same period were 156,726, which means that only 4.8% of those arrested applied for asylum in Greece. The rest could be either illegal immigrants or “asylum-shoppers”].
 - ▶ Frontex's Executive Director Mr Fabrice Leggeri pointed out that a large network operates in Turkey which sells forged Syrian passports to illegal immigrants. He also emphasized that due to the great inflow not all immigrants are being screened and thus there is no full picture of the actual profile of all these immigrants
 - ▶ According to official European Commission data, out of the 160,000 illegal immigrants who were arrested in Greece during the January–July 2015 period, only 55,000 have been fingerprinted.
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