Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals Reach 82,978 in 2019; Deaths Reach 1,080

Geneva – the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports that 82,978 migrants and refugees have entered Europe by sea through 23 October, a 15 per cent decrease from the 97,765 arriving during the same period last year.

Over half all arrivals this year (45,105) have landed in Greece, while almost one-quarter (20,036) have landed in Spain. Greece and Spain combine to account for 78 per cent of the region’s irregular sea landings, with the balance arriving in much smaller proportions to Italy, Malta and Cyprus (see chart below).

Deaths recorded on the three main Mediterranean Sea routes through six months of 2019 are at 1,080 individuals – or almost half the 1,971 deaths confirmed during the same period in 2018 (see chart below).
In the Eastern Mediterranean, a three-year-old boy died, and a man went missing when a boat in which 34 people were travelling collided with a Hellenic Coast Guard vessel on 23 October. This terrible accident happened of the coast of Kos, Greece. Thirty-seven per cent of those who died in 2019 in the Eastern Mediterranean were children, with 26 child migrant deaths documented on this route.

**IOM Italy**

IOM Rome’s Flavio Di Giacomo cited official Ministry of Interior figures of 9,432 migrants who have arrived in Italy by sea this year through 23 October, compared to 21,935 at this same time in 2018. IOM Libya has reported that 7,346 migrants have been intercepted at sea and returned to Libya in 2019, through 15 October.

**IOM Spain**

IOM Spain’s Ana Dodevska reported on Thursday sea arrivals to Spain, through 23 October have reached 20,006, or nearly double the 10,538 men, women and children who arrived in Spain through the first six months of 2019. That calculates to an average of almost 68 persons per day for the entire year, compared to 2018’s average of over 160 per day.

While monthly arrivals to Spain are lower this year overall, fatalities on the Western Mediterranean route remain high – with 318 deaths reported through six months of this year, compared to 549 at this time in 2018.

**IOM Greece**

IOM Greece’s Christine Nikolaidou noted on Thursday (24/10) that since Friday (18/10), the Hellenic Coast Guard (HCG) reported at least 24 incidents requiring search and rescue operations off the islands of Kos, Symi, Lesvos, Samos, Chios, Kalymnos, Strongyli, Samothrace and the port of Alexandroupoli. The HCG rescued a total of 675 migrants and transferred them to the respective ports.

Those arrivals, plus some 1,400 arrivals IOM recorded between 16-22 October, bring to 45,105 the total number of sea arrivals to Greece this year (see chart below).
IOM Greece also reported Thursday that the five weeks between 29 August and 1 October saw the ten busiest irregular migrant arrival days this year, days when at least 562 men, women and children entered Greek waters along the Eastern Mediterranean route. On the busiest day, 26 September, a total of 819 migrants arrived (see chart below).

That compares to the average of 153 individuals each day for the year, as a whole. By contrast the busiest day for arrivals on this route was 22 October 2015, when 8,292 men, women and children arrived irregularly in Greek waters.

![Top 10 Daily Arrivals in Greece](chart)

### Missing Migrants Project

2019 is the sixth year of IOM’s efforts to systematically record deaths on migration routes worldwide through its Missing Migrants Project. Since the beginning of 2014, the project has recorded the deaths of 33,735 people, including 2,573 in 2019 (see chart below).

Due to the challenges of collecting information about these people and the contexts of their deaths, the true number of lives lost during migration is likely much higher. Missing Migrants Project records should only be viewed as indicative of the risks associated with migration, rather than representative of the true number of deaths across time or geography.

Reports emerged on 23 October that the remains of 39 people were found inside a refrigerated lorry container parked at an industrial park in Essex, England. A police investigation was launched to conduct enquiries into these tragic deaths and piece together the circumstances of this incident. Eight of the deceased are women and 31 are men, and all are believed to be Chinese nationals. Initial police reports indicate that the trailer travelled from Zeebrugge, Belgium to the port of Purfleet in Essex on Wednesday 23 October.

Along the Western Balkans route, several deaths were documented during the past weeks, as people made their way across Bosnia and Herzegovina to reach western Europe. On 30 September, a man drowned in the Korana river, in Cazin, Una-Sana canton. The remains of a man were found in Biléca, near border with Montenegro, on 5 October.

Just a few days later, a young man was shot by a local resident when he was spending the night with a group of migrants in a village in Cazin, Una-Sana canton, on 9 October. Additionally, a death was recorded in North Macedonia on 12 October, when a 16-year-old Afghan boy died from the injuries sustained while travelling on top of a freight train. He was hospitalized in the town of
Gevgelija after being found severely injured near railway tracks on 1 October. Unfortunately, he did not recover from his injuries and passed away at the hospital 11 days later.

At least 24 people have died on the Western Balkans route so far this year: eight deaths took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, six in Serbia, five in Croatia, three in North Macedonia and two in Slovenia. There were 41 deaths documented along this route in 2018.

On the US-México border, three men drowned in the Río Bravo when attempting to reach Texas – their bodies were recovered on the Mexican riverbanks on October 21 and 22. Since the beginning of 2019, the deaths of 107 people (including at least 15 children) have been documented in the Río Bravo. This figure is already higher than the total number of drownings (87) recorded in the Río Bravo for all of 2018.

In México, the body of the fourth person who went missing during the 11 October shipwreck off the coast of Tonalá, Chiapas was recovered on 18 October in the nearby municipality of San Mateo del Mar, Oaxaca. He is believed to be a national of Cameroon, as were the other three people who lost their lives in this shipwreck. Additionally, another Cameroonian man died in a vehicle accident in 22 October near Hermosillo, Sonora.

In total, at least 621 people have lost their lives in the Americas in 2019, compared with 499 recorded through this point in 2018, an increase this year by almost 25 per cent.

Missing Migrants Project data are compiled by IOM staff based at its Global Migration Data Analysis Centre but come from a variety of sources, some of which are unofficial. To learn more about how data on migrants’ deaths and disappearances are collected, click here.

For latest arrivals and fatalities in the Mediterranean, click [here](#). Learn more about the [Missing Migrants Project](#).
See contacts [here](#).