

Irregular migration towards the EU · Q1 2026

All charts use Frontex and Spanish Ministry of the Interior data, analysed by IEAM.

Detections at the EU’s external borders

-39%

In the first three months of 2026, detections decreased by 39% compared with the same period of 2025.

Detections of irregular border crossings

Route	Jan-Mar 2026	Change vs 2025
Eastern Mediterranean	6,455	-34%
Central Mediterranean	6,162	-33%
Western Mediterranean	4,402	+66%
Western African route	1,640	-83%

Main nationalities

Eastern Mediterranean: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sudan.

Central Mediterranean: Bangladesh, Somalia, Pakistan.

Western Mediterranean: Algeria, Mali, Morocco.

Western African route: The Gambia, Senegal, Mali.

Arrivals in Spain by sea and land

Arrivals	2025 → 2026	Decrease
Sea and land	11,988 → 6,218	48%
By sea	11,609 → 4,352	63%

Comparison of the first three months of each year.

Key takeaways

Adverse weather conditions along the main migration routes towards the EU, and agreements with transit countries such as Senegal and Mauritania, are contributing to fewer irregular border crossings.

The situation in the Middle East could trigger new population movements in the coming months.