

Clandestino Irregular Migration Trends Across Europe

Synopsis

The CLANDESTINO project is concerned with the quantitative, legal and ethical dimensions of irregular migration in Europe. The project aims to gather and improve quantitative data on irregular migration. It will assess existing and develop new methodologies, as well as guidelines for researching irregular migration.

Background

Irregular immigration (flows) and irregular immigrant populations (stocks) rank high on the list of policy concerns in Europe. Estimates suggest that between 4-8 million irregular immigrants may reside and/or work in the EU, and that up to 500,000 immigrants arrive irregularly each year. Such figures raise public concern over 'floods of illegal immigrants', unfair competition over jobs or illegitimate claims on public services. In response policies range from turning a blind eye, to stepping-up removals or large scale regularisation. Meanwhile, little difference is made between the various forms of irregular migration, including clandestine entry, absconded asylum seekers, irregular residence, and working in breach of visa regulations. Instead, all types are lumped together under one and the same heading. Quantitative data is often scarce or of dubious quality and discussion is characterised by guess, speculation, assumption and allegation. Estimates usually range from the obviously low to the implausibly high. In part this is due to population being hidden, are hard to reach and difficult to quantify, but also the discourse is highly politicised and figures tend to be downplayed or exaggerated depending on intention and standpoint of those making such assertions. Thus, how many irregular immigrants enter and stay in the European Union, its individual member states, cities, towns and rural areas remains in the dark and the size of this social problem actually unknown. Furthermore, despite improvements in research technique much of it remains qualitative in nature. Academics seem hesitant in engaging in quantitative studies, as they are often seen as 'number games' and or even as playing into the hands of enforcements agencies. It could be argued, however, that the scientific community neglects its responsibility for producing reliable social knowledge; instead, the lack of data limits analytical and theoretical understanding that may allow for new approaches.

Aims

This project responds to the need for more reliable and systematic data on irregular migration in the European Union and by national, local and non-governmental institutions. The creation of a database on irregular migration is a key contribution that will be kept regularly up-dated and should offer a useful tool for policy makers and non-governmental agencies alike. The project will also take into consideration, highlight and discuss the ethical implications of collecting data on irregular migrants as well as the methodological problems inherent to the study of such a phenomenon. It will investigate the different dimensions of illegal-

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-ity (related to entry, residence and work) and their different combinations (hence, distinguishing between different types of irregular migration). The project will:

- i) provide an inventory of data and estimates on irregular migration (stocks and flows) in selected EU countries
- ii) analyse these data comparatively,
- iii) reflect on the ethical and methodological issues involved in the collection of data, the elaboration of estimates, and their subsequent use in designing relevant policies,
- iv) propose a new method for collecting and evaluating data/estimates on irregular migration across the EU,
- v) discuss with the policy and user communities in several EU countries on ethical and methodological questions with a view to gaining their insights as regards the nature of the data/estimates needed and the ethical questions involved in their collection and use.

The project covers selected countries within the EU: Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, and the United Kingdom. In addition, three countries of transit migration are studied - Ukraine, Turkey, and Morocco - which are regarded as important 'stepping stones' by irregular migrants en route to the EU.

Deliverables/Methods

Clandestino will not conduct primary research; instead, it will concentrate on secondary analysis and on theoretical work. The project will produce a number of reports, notably on methodological issues, ethical issues, the situation in fifteen countries, comparisons of irregular migration in receiving and in transit countries, and policy aspects. Meetings, workshops and conferences will be held across Europe with local, national and EU policy makers, NGOs and media representatives to improve awareness for irregular immigrants and facilitate a dialogue between all social groups.

The main project is led by Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) and funded by the European Commission, Sixth Framework Programme. COMPAS is responsible for conducting the UK study, coordinating studies of three transit countries, preparing a comparative report on transit (with Greek partners) and contributing to a report on ethics in the field of irregular migration research.

All reports will be made available at:

http://www.eliamep.gr/eliamep/content/home/research/research_projects/clandestino/en/

Work in progress

- Bastian Vollmer, *Irregular Migration – Report on the United Kingdom*. Report to be completed in September 2008
- Franck Düvell, Anna Triandafyllidou, Bastian Vollmer, *Ethical Issues in Irregular Migration Research*. Report to be completed in July 2008. This will also be published in *Population, Space and Place* in 2009
- *Transit report* – to be completed in November 08

Collaborators:

- Project Partners: ELIAMEP, Athens, Greece (Coordinators); Centre for International Relations (CIR), Warsaw, Poland; Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI), Hamburg, Germany); International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Vienna, Austria; Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), Brussels, Belgium.
- Country Experts (Transit Countries only): Morocco – Dr. Mehdi Lahlou, National Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics, Paris; Ukraine – Dr. Yaroslav Pylynskyi, Kennan Institute, Kiev; Turkey - Dr. Ibrahim Kaya, Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Biga-Canakkale.

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