

Population and Migration in Europe

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Highlights

Managing the movement of people over national borders is a global issue often spotlighted by tragedies, as when a ship overloaded with migrants sinks. The number of migrants, people outside their country of birth or citizenship for a year or more, doubled in the past two decades to 215 million.

The major incentives to cross national borders are persisting demographic and economic inequalities just as revolutions in communications and transportation make it easier to learn about and travel to other countries. Inequalities are hard to reduce and globalization is difficult to reverse, so policy makers often try to manage migration by adjusting the rights of migrants.

Europe has a tenth of the world's people, a quarter of the world's countries, and a third of the world's migrants. The share of migrants in European countries averages 10 percent, but varies from less than five percent in Eastern Europe to over 20 percent in Switzerland. The major migration issues are how to attract more skilled migrants to Europe and how to integrate low-skilled migrants and their children now in Europe.

Sex, Money and Migration

The world's population of seven billion today increases by 82 million a year, that is, the world adds the equivalent of Germany each year in developing countries. There are 195 nation-states, up from 43 in 1900. Creating new nations often produces migrants, as in ex-Yugoslavia and the ex-USSR.

A migrant is defined by the UN as a person outside her country of birth or citizenship for 12 months or more, regardless of the reason for being abroad or legal status. If the world's 215 million migrants were collected in one place, "migrant nation" would be the fifth-largest (China, India, US, Indonesia, **Migrant Nation**, Brazil, Russia and Pakistan).

Far more people want to be international migrants, but most countries do not plan for immigration. The five major immigration countries are the US (taking 1.1 million immigrants a year), Canada (275,000), Australia (175,000), New Zealand (45,000), and Israel (25,000). In the US, over a quarter of the 40 million foreign-born residents are unauthorized.

Is there too much or too little migration? Most people do not become international migrants. Inertia, plus government regulations and border patrols, are the major forms of migration control. Migration responds to differences, and increases with persisting demographic and economic gaps just as the communications and transportation revolutions make learning about opportunities abroad and crossing borders easier.

- Uneven population growth. In 1800, Europe had 21 percent of the world's one billion residents and Africa 11 percent, that is, Europe had twice as many people as Africa. In 2000, Africa had slightly more people than Europe. By 2050 – if current trends continue – Europe will have shrunk to 725 million of the world's 9.6 billion residents and Africa will have

increased to 2.3 billion or 20 percent of the world's people. Will Africans emigrate, as Europeans did in the 19th century?

- Increased economic inequality. Worldwide GDP was \$62 trillion in 2010 (US \$15 trillion-not PPP), an average \$9,000 per person a year. The 30 high-income countries had a seventh of the world's people but two-thirds of the world's economic output, an average \$40,000 a year, 10 times more than the \$3,800 average in the poorer 170 countries. Will young people migrate for 10-1 income differences?
- Revolutions in communications and transportation make migration more feasible and easier. Will rich countries manage migration by changing the item easiest for governments to adjust – the rights of non-citizens?

Europe

Europe was shaped by emigration to the Americas, and migration that the legacies of war and the creation of new nation states. More recently, the 27-nation EU has promoted internal migration as one of the four freedoms to move goods, capital, services, and workers freely over national borders. However, only about 10 million EU nationals have moved from one EU country to another, including a third Romanians and Poles.

Two thirds of the 30 million foreigners in EU nations are from non-EU countries, including six million Europeans from non-EU countries (half Turks), five million Africans, and three million foreigners from the Americas. These non-EU foreigners include mostly low-skilled migrants, many guest workers recruited to fill jobs in the 1960s or their descendents.

European countries became reluctant destinations for migrants at a time of precarious economic recovery. During the 1960s, the US "guns and butter" economy sustained demand for VWs and other European goods at a time when European currencies were undervalued and a combination of a delayed baby boom, expanding higher education, and earlier retirement limited the supply of labor in France, Germany, and other countries. Leaders of an integrating Europe allowed labor-short employers to recruit guest workers first in Italy, and later in other southern European countries and North Africa.

Guest workers were expected to work for several years in northern Europe, return with savings and skills, and spur development from southern Italy to eastern Turkey. However, the demand for labor persisted, and some migrants earned the right to unify and form families and, after five years, many were allowed to and did settle. European nations such as Germany tried to encourage returns for the first decade after recruitment was stopped in 1973, dealt with asylum seekers and illegal immigration for the next decade, and have since been trying to integrate settled migrants and their children. More countries are considering integration contracts that require foreigners to learn Dutch or German or risk losing the right to receive government benefits or stay in the country.

European leaders who want more high-skilled immigration developed a Blue Card program that makes it relatively easy for employers to hire non-EU foreigners who have at least a bachelor's degree and will earn 1.5 times the average gross salary of the country they are entering. Blue Card professionals can enter with their families and after 18 months move to another EU

country. Many EU member states have also made it easier for foreigners who graduate from local universities to stay, work and settle.

Both Europe and the US want to attract the best and brightest, the world's global talent, a battle the US appears to be winning because of English, lower taxes, and stock options. Most of the issues involve low-skilled migrants. The US is more successful than Europe at getting low-skilled migrants into jobs, but not always successful at ensuring that these jobs generate above poverty-level incomes and access to work-related benefits. Low-skilled migrants in European countries with regular jobs, on the other hand, generally have above poverty-level incomes and access to work-related benefits. However, many are not in the labor force, and many of those in the labor force are unemployed.

Further Reading

Migration News. <http://migration.ucdavis.edu/>