

1. The Brief

The brief was just about as good as it gets. The client (Brussels-based, Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe) had an accurate understanding of their own strategic research requirements. We worked with our client to clarify and refine their initial brief. A revised version was prepared by the client for the use of the research project donors. An extract from that brief follows:

“An accurate representation of churches’ concerns in the area of European migration policy, based on:

- An accurate picture of the reality of migration across Europe,
- A representative idea of where and how churches in Europe are involved in the area of migration.

Aim

The study will describe some of the most essential information on migration across Europe and churches response broken down by country.

Steps and Methods

- Research into existing statistical information on migration profiles of European countries.
- Synthesis of existing statistical information on migrants .
- Research into churches working in assisting migrants.
- An initial mapping of existing projects/ communities in which migrants change the ecclesial reality of churches in Europe.

Central questions

- Statistical picture: who are migrants (labour/refugees/family), where do they come from, what do they do?
- What are churches doing to assist migrants?
- How is Christian presence changing through migration?

Timeframe

3-6 months (if additional funding or in-kind contributions can be found)

2. The Research Methodology

The important steps in this process included:

a. Literature Review

An extensive literature review covering the field of migration studies, anthropology, sociology, theology, and postgraduate mss.) with particular reference to studies in Europe. Sixty one bibliographic resources are referenced with other web-based and journal resources indicated throughout the text.

b. Statistical collection and synthesis

Gathering, collating, assessing, and analysing national and international migration statistics. These included Eurostats, UNHCR, national census and statistical offices, World Christian Database, UNECE, Operation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD), World Bank, Council of Europe (COE), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIP), the CIA World Factbook, and the European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS).

These provided vital statistical data allowing cross-national comparisons for 46 European countries (all Council of Europe Countries except Azerbaijan, and including Belarus).

c. 'Field' research

Telephone, email, and personal contacts were utilised to gather narrative, anecdotal and case study material for the descriptive section of each country profile. Not surprisingly, the most informed sources of information proved to be individuals who were active on behalf of their denomination, or nationally, in the area of migration. Few national Evangelical Alliances had significant information at their fingertips, several ecumenical National Councils of Churches were able to supply valuable information. The Refugee Highway associated with Hope For Europe and the European Evangelical Alliance is perhaps the most informed of any pan-European Evangelical grouping.

3. The published Research Report

This is being released in Palermo, Sicily, on the 9th April 2008, simultaneously with my presentation of the findings here at this conference.

We believe that, although the report is far from complete, it is the most comprehensive treatment of migration at a pan-European level by a Christian Research Agency to date and, in fact, we believe it to be unique.

a. Descriptive and analytical chapters

The 140 page report has four introductory chapters:

Chapter One: Describing migration in Europe (explanations, definitions, terminology)

Chapter Two: Contemporary Patterns of Migration in Europe

Chapter Three: Theologies of migration (OT, NT, Pentecost, vulnerability of the migrant)

Chapter Four: Churches Responding to Migrants and Migration in Europe

b. Statistical chapters

Following these chapters are 90 pages of 'country profiles'; two pages per country. The first page for each country contains the collated statistical data and the second page carries descriptive

text with the most pertinent data. In several instances there was very little or no information for a country. The report was prepared too late to take into account the declaration of the (disputed) independence of the State of Kosovo.

c. Policy chapters

Our client has previously issued several policy statements addressing the European Institutions. These were included as appendices in the final report.

4. The Findings

This is all that some of you have doubtless been waiting for! What did we discover? What important themes emerge?

a. Discoveries

Statistical data is inconsistent, idiosyncratic, politically vulnerable, and generally unreliable. 'Everything I tell you about migration in Europe is a lie!' The British Audit Commission advised a gathering of Local Authority Officers in February 2008 that they should not base their Local Authority Policies on statistics as they were wholly unreliable. They were advised that their work would be messy and feel unco-ordinated.

Dispelling myths

- Migration within Europe is largely internal European migration. Only 37% of EU migrants in 2004 were non-EU nationals.
- In 2006 there were 65,000 Polish migrants in Ireland, just under half the number of British migrants in Ireland. There are an estimated 0.5 to 0.6 million Polish nationals living in the UK. In 2006, 3,200 migrants left Lithuania to live in the UK. 1,500 migrants left the UK to live in Lithuania.
- 23.6% of migrant populations in the OECD countries have tertiary level education compared with 19.1% of the indigenous populations. Similarly, the percentage of migrant populations with no education is higher than for indigenous populations.
- Asylum applications are declining. Down from 400,000 in 2002 (EU27) to 200,000 in 2006.
- After the Indian and the Chinese diaspora, the largest diaspora group is British.

New insights

- Between 1988 and 2006, an estimated 9,000 people have died trying to cross the borders of the European Union.
- UN definition of a migrant being a person who stays outside their usual country of residence for more than a year places estimates of migrants in 2005 at 200 million, with approximately 9 million of those being refugees.
- In Moldova, the poorest country in Europe, a common occurrence is that of the family where children are left in the care of grandparents whilst parents leave for work in other

countries. Between 245-354,000 Moldovans work abroad (2004) according to Government census and surveys. Remittances to Moldova comprise 31.5% of its GDP.

- In Luxembourg, 38% of the population is a foreign national.
- Most Polish migrants are in the UK. Most Algerians are in France, Most Portugese migrants are in France, Most American migrants are evenly spread between Germany and the UK.
- National attitudes towards migrants and the 'other' vary enormously within Europe. From Iceland (at 8% who are hostile to the idea of such people as neighbours) compared with Hungary (57% of Hungarians would not want such people a a neighbour)
- In 2004, the COE estimated 24.5 million foreign stock (5.6% of the population of the COE). The UN estimated this in 2005 at 63.9 million and tried to account for missing COE data and the presence of regular and irregular migrants.
- Remittances within Europe (mostly eastwards) are estimated at 41.5 billion Euros.

5. Migration and Faith

Attitudes towards migrants generally correlate positively with increasing levels of church attendance. Churchgoers are likely to be more socially 'progressive' rather than socially conservative.

6. Migrant Congregations

The map shows the estimated distribution of migrant congregations in Europe based on reporting, actual knowledge, and some estimation of congregation presence in various European countries. Countries not listed are not known to have migrant congregations or are countries of which I have little information. It is usually the latter as there are very few countries where absolutely no migrant Christians met for worship and/or bible study.

7. Trying to fill the gaps: the implications

- Internal migration is likely to slow down within the EU. Weakening western currencies make foreign earnings less attractive. Restrictions on accessing generous social and medical welfare programmes causes some anxieties among migrants. The downturn in housing markets will lead to a loss of construction industry jobs. This is likely to result in a shift from permanent migration to situations where the migrant may have in long-term view a return to their country of origin (particularly for nationals of EU member states).
- Islamic migrants in Europe: secularisation, modernisation, and evangelistic mission.

- Protestantism in Spain and Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy in the traditionally Protestant Countries of Western Europe (Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, & the UK).
- Religion and the public square: Tony Blair (increasing religiously plural western societies). Archbishop of Canterbury (de-privatisation of religion). Jewish donors (funding of social cohesion initiatives).
- 'Climate change' Christians of the South in the North.

Despite these actual and predicted changes, our knowledge is far from complete and requires the ongoing and active co-operation of national actors.

By putting statistics to stories we are attempting to stimulate further research activity and more accurate reporting of migration in Europe. NOVA has gathered and published a unique resource. The challenge is to keep it current and it is intended that our website will eventually host the data that support the current printed research report.

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