

MirreM Data Collection – Country Context

FRANCE

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Instructions:

Reflecting on your deskwork and fieldwork, please provide a brief snapshot (1 – 3 pages in total) of the overall picture of irregular migration data in your country. For each question, please address stocks, flows and indicators (or indicate N/A).

Questions:

1. What is your overall assessment of the quality of irregular migration data in your country?

The quality of irregular migration data in France has certain limitations and concerns that need to be addressed according to the reviewed sources such as: IOM Data, OECD Outlooks, INSEE and the Reports to Parliament - article L. 111-10 of the Code on the Entry and Residence of Foreigners and the Right of Asylum (CESEDA). The data is publicly available and electronically accessible without the need for special permissions, which is a positive aspect. However, there is limited information available regarding the data sources, collection methods, and overall data quality. This lack of documentation can make it challenging to assess the reliability and accuracy of the data. There are certain figures that in one year (2019) are X and the following year (2020) are Y. We refer to the fact that the figures are not consistent in the reports, generating ambiguity. In addition, we detected that France has a strong statistical use but falls short in the use and analysis of irregular migration.

Furthermore, the sources many times presents the data without providing a clear methodology of how they obtain the data. Many times, there is a single data source, which can be a limitation. Using data from multiple sources can help validate findings and improve data quality. Lastly, there is an acknowledgment of uncertainty in the data, with the authors noting that the central estimate may change due to ongoing tests. It would be beneficial to provide a range of estimates to account for this uncertainty.

In summary, while irregular migration data in France is accessible, it appears to have significant limitations in terms of documentation, validity, reliability, and methodology. Addressing these issues and incorporating data from multiple sources could improve the overall quality and credibility of the data.

2. How is irregular migration data generally used in policy making?

Immigration Detention and Enforcement: France has prioritised enhancing immigration detention policies, which include measures to expedite the deportation process and increase detaining of undocumented migrants. These policies aim to address irregular migration and tighten border security, but they have faced criticism from human rights

organisations due to concerns about human rights violations and the conditions within detention centres.

Selective Immigration and Point-Based Systems: France is moving towards a selective immigration approach. This approach focuses on attracting skilled migrants based on factors such as education, work skills, and language fluency, with the goal of regulating and managing immigration more effectively.

Dublin Procedure and Irregular Migration Management:

France's policies centre on encouraging voluntary or forced returns of undocumented individuals through the Dublin procedure, which allocates responsibility for asylum claims. The country also aims to combat human trafficking, identify irregular migrants, detain them, and restrict transit migration, aligning with broader European Union objectives to manage migration flows and prevent irregular entries.

3. How did you go about the data collection process?

The collection of data for France through desk research, focusing on sources such as IOM Data, OECD Outlooks, INSEE and the Reports to Parliament - article L. 111-10 of the Code on the Entry and Residence of Foreigners and the Right of Asylum (CESEDA). These sources allowed us to extract relevant information about the most significant political and legislative developments and debates in France, as well as estimates and indicators of irregular migrants within the country.

4. Were there any specific difficulties you experienced during this process? How did you address them?

During the data collection process, several challenges emerged. The absence of range information made it difficult to assess the precision of estimates limiting the availability of specific numerical figures. Inconsistent reporting of data collection methods raised concerns about data reliability, and the scarcity of data before 2016 hindered the analysis of long-term trends. Furthermore, some sources contained duplicated or contradictory information, complicating the data reconciliation process. To navigate these issues, we adopted a cautious and rigorous approach, focusing on the most reliable sources, cross-referencing data from multiple sources, using qualitative analysis when necessary, and emphasizing the most recent and comprehensive data available while being mindful of trends before 2016.

5. What were the main gaps in the evidence base (i.e., unmet user needs) that emerged during your data collection process?

During the data collection process, notable gaps in the evidence base became apparent. These included a lack of segregation data between 2008 and 2021, limiting the analysis of gender and age. Nevertheless, France do an effort to identify nationalities of irregular migration. The absence of range information in many sources posed challenges in assessing the precision of estimates and understanding uncertainty. Inconsistent and non-transparent data collection methodologies further complicated the reliability and comparability of data across sources.

6. Were there any meetings with producers or users of irregular migration estimates and indicators that you were unable to secure, but sense that endeavouring to do so in future may be worthwhile? If so, please provide contact information for this person/entity and explain why you think such detail would be helpful. NO
7. Please point to an example of good practice estimating irregular migration and/or making use of estimates of irregular migration in policy-making that you came across. Why did you select this example? You can answer the question about good practice in estimating irregular migration and using these estimates in policy-making as follows:

A notable example of exemplary practice in estimating irregular migration and using these estimates in policy-making can be found in France's policies regarding the encouragement of voluntary or forced returns (in French terms is considered as assisted or non-assisted returns that non-assisted are considered forced returns). This example stands out for its comprehensive in the reports to Parliament, offering a wealth of detailed statistics. These statistics differentiate various aspects of returns, providing specific information on assisted removals, forced removals, readmission, and destinations (whether they are third countries or European countries). Additionally, the reports include data on departures, distinguishing between voluntary assisted departures and spontaneous departures. This practice is commendable for its transparency, which is essential for building trust among stakeholders and the public, its ability to inform policy-making through specific data, its enhancement of accountability, and its indication of a willingness to cooperate with other nations, fostering regional collaboration in addressing irregular migration's complexities. France's approach serves as a valuable model for other countries grappling with the challenges of irregular migration.