

MirreM Data Collection – Country Context

GREECE

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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?

Overall data on irregular migration flows is directly relevant to external borders control and is collected by the state authorities who are primary responsible to collect, process and disseminate the statistics. Data is electronically accessible through the website of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

No estimates since the last reports from the CLANDESTINO project or qualitative data as regards to the characteristics of irregular migrants are available with few exceptions which focus the research on certain nationalities. Data on stocks can be found only from the Annual reports of the Labour Inspectorate on the number of aliens found to be employed without insurance in the inspected enterprises.

There is electronically accessible information on most of the indicators sourced from the websites of national authorities or international organizations or entities, but lack of analysis on the meaning of these indicators in relation to existing stocks of migrants without documents or relation to the implemented policies.

The presentation of some data (e.g. on irregular arrivals) in recent years is getting more focused on certain categories and can be used to measure the implementation of different policies to certain extent.

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

The data are used to measure the impact of policies and implemented measures, and to develop further policies in line with current priorities – national and European. In Greece, as one of the main challenges in migration remains the protection of external borders, most of the collected and publicly available data refer to irregular migration flows and are used to design policies mainly as regards to the protection of the borders and further case management of those who arrive.

Data or estimates on irregular migrants' stock in Greece is not available, but according to the stakeholders interviewed during the field research in the framework of MIRREM, would be useful to design more targeted policies against the undeclared work in the labour market and

especially in the sectors of tourism and agriculture, if combined with analysis on qualitative characteristics of the irregular migrants.

Recent example of such an initiative are the signed memoranda between Greece and Bangladesh, and Greece with Egypt with two main points of interest – to regularise the stay and work of those irregular migrants working in seasonal jobs, and to return the rest who do not comply with the law. In the last years, the government has initiated the development of bilateral relations also with other countries of origin of migrants who are arriving and staying irregularly in Greece (rejected asylum seekers) – such as Pakistan and Iraq.

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

I started with the desk research with the initial aim to check the availability of data accessible online from the ministries and public institutions involved in the implementation of policies as regards to migrants flows and stocks – Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Ministry of Citizens protection (Hellenic Police), Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy (for data from the Hellenic Coast Guards), from of Hellenic Labour Inspectorate; data portals of international organizations such as IOM and UNHCR, but also information on numbers sourced from European or international institutions such as the country reports for Greece from European Migration Network, EASO and OECD. Then, I used the reverse method – I checked which are the remaining gaps in the data and tried to find the relevant documents or databases to fill in the number either for certain years or in whole categories.

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

One of the difficulties was to follow a consistent presentation of the data for the required period between 2008-2023 for some of the indicators. For example the Ministry of Migration and Asylum changed their way of presenting data in 2019-2020 (e.g. the data related to stay permits – the stay permits for exceptional reasons which were explicitly presented each year as number of issued stay permits per type by nationality and by sex in the period between 2016 until 2019, but since 2020 the number of those stay permits can't be distinguished as they are presented under the number of a whole category - "other" - which contains many types of stay permits).

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

Data are missing on births from undocumented parents.

Estimations on stocks of irregular migrants for the period of interest in MIRREM are missing, there is a gap in this research area, apart from some case studies focusing mostly on qualitative characteristics of the irregular migration in certain sectors of the economy or of certain nationalities.

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?

First, as good practice I consider that the practice in collecting the data and using them should be useful to monitor the implementation of certain policies, to measure the effect or to monitor the implementation of a certain measure, or to follow the development of a phenomenon and be able to draw conclusions out of the numbers. Also, according to the criteria of good practices in general, I will borrow from the definition of EWSI for good practices, that it should have a clear description of the objectives and purposes and be at least one year old. In Greece there is no practice in the estimation of irregular migration, and in that sense neither good practice can be showcased. But something which seems to match the criteria of a good practice in using the statistics and data to monitor/to follow the implementation of a policy, are the new templates, which the government adopted to collect/present statistics on new irregular arrivals on the islands and inland, which also contain data about the number of migrants staying in each of the facilities on the islands and a comparison of this number to the maximum number of people that these facilities have the capacity to host. These statistics refer to flows and are updated on daily basis. This seems to be feasible way for the authorities to monitor the number of people hosted in the facilities on the islands and to be able to control that they won't be preoccupied as it was the case a few years ago.