

MirreM Data Collection

Other EU indicators

Indicators: ¹

- Frontex (Migratory Map, ARA, WB ARA)
- IOM (Missing Migrants, relevant DTM indicators)
- KCMD (Atlas, EU Return Dashboard, children in migration)
- UNHCR-UNICEF-IOM (refugee and migrant children in Europe)
- UNODC (StoryMap, Global Study)

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Questions:

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

Depends on the indicator/source – Frontex was one of the more robust sources of data. Although not as transparent in terms of methodology, it is collected fairly consistently across time and space (various Member States).

Most other international/EU sources draw upon Eurostat data for their analysis, meaning that there are few original sources for irregular migration data at the European level. While this may negatively impact on the diversity and depth of insights available, it also positively impacts consistency in terms of data usage (and reliability).

In terms of the overall quality criteria assessment, we found it not easy to fulfil. The process of evaluating irregular migration data proved difficult due to the fragmented nature of available data sources. A particular challenge entailed acquiring the methodology for each indicator, alongside assessing the reliability of the data and its applicability in policymaking.

On the other hand, as part of our good practice examples, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) stands out. Their Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the Missing Migrants Project demonstrate a commendable approach to

¹ As noted in the README file, only the data from FRONTEX and IOM are included in the database. We also initially considered including data from UNODC's Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants (number of people who arrived irregularly to Europe by the sea) and KCMD's EU Return Dashboard (nationalities that receive an order to leave) but excluded them as UNODC uses FRONTEX data, and KCMD uses Eurostat data. The data from UNHCR-UNICEF-IOM (refugee and migrant children in Europe) have also been excluded as refugees and unaccompanied migrant children are not irregular migrants.

data collection, offering a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of irregular migration trends and transparency of methodology.

Lastly, the availability of detailed and visually appealing graphs and visualizations within the irregular migration data sources can be noted. In certain instances, these visual representations prove to be both sophisticated and interactive, offering a level of detail that is challenging to replicate in traditional formats (e.g. Excel) and can be viewed as a useful model.

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

We are not sure if this can be generalised, given the wide range of European policymakers with a wide range of priorities. However, some notes can be highlighted: Frontex data is notably widely used to highlight trends on irregular migration (flows in particular) across the European space. On the other hand, IOM's Missing Migrants Project data is often referenced by NGOs, academics and migrant advocates, in policy debates and discussions on the mortal impact of migration policies, particularly along the EU's external borders. Given UNODC's mandate countering migrant smuggling and human trafficking, its data is primarily used in the context of those types of irregular migration processes.

The data provided by intergovernmental organisations such as IOM, UNHCR, Frontex, KCMD, and UNODC influences policymaking in various ways. Policymakers can draw on the data in their development of evidence-based migration policies – and these institutions themselves use this data when they engage with States on the topic.

Analysing migration trends, demographic shifts, and displacement patterns allows for a nuanced understanding of the factors driving migration, enabling the formulation of policies that address root causes and respond to current realities. Moreover, policymakers can identify regions experiencing high migration flows, enabling targeted resource allocation for border management, humanitarian assistance, and support services for displaced populations.

Data from Frontex and UNODC data contribute to the operational side of policy implementation, including in terms of border control measures. Policymakers can adjust strategies based on information about irregular migration routes, trafficking patterns, and areas with heightened security risks.

In the case of the UNHCR data on displaced populations, it guides UNHCR's work with policymakers in designing and implementing humanitarian responses. Understanding the demographics, needs, and vulnerabilities of displaced persons allows for the development of policies that prioritize the protection and well-being of these individuals.

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

Pre-selection of sources/indicators of relevance by UMaasticht included:

- Frontex's Migratory Map and Annual Risk Analyses
- IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and Missing Migrants Project
- UNODC's Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants (SOM)
- The European Commission's Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography (KCMD)

After which, ICMPD verified those indicators and selected those of most relevance, excluding those that did not produce their own data but rather reproduced others' data (notable Frontex, IOM or Eurostat data), in discussion with Maastricht.

In addition, we considered first other indicators from the same organisations (e.g. UNODC Global Study on smuggling, other IOM DTM indicators) and collected those. Following this, we considered other international/EU organisations that collect or use data on irregular migration (within or towards Europe), first checking which collect their own data, what type of data was collected (e.g. qualitative or quantitative), including them in the mapping after discussion with UMaasticht.

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

We experienced challenges in terms of the re-using of others' data (i.e. Eurostat). Many sources reproduced Eurostat data but did not produce their own data, making it difficult to identify new sources of indicators.

Others that did produce their own data produced primarily qualitative data (e.g. UNODC StoryMaps, 4Mi from MMC), which cannot be captured in the same way.

We also found differences in data produced by the same actor – i.e. WB ARA needed to be reproduced as it had different information from the main ARA.

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

Frequently encountered issues included:

- The absence of raw data in several instances.
- Often, data were already formatted into tables, making it challenging to locate specific information.
- Notably, there were instances where only aggregate data was presented, limiting the ability to delve into specific details.
- In certain cases, there were discrepancies in data disaggregation - impacting the overall data reliability.
- There were instances where understanding the methodology proved to be challenging (missing the methodology).
- Gaps in data over certain years hindered the ability to track trends and patterns accurately, leading to an incomplete temporal understanding of the phenomenon.

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.

N/A

- 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?**

One relevant example could be the European Migration Network (EMN) - Ad-Hoc Query Mechanism:

The EMN, an initiative of the European Commission, operates an Ad-Hoc Query Mechanism. This mechanism allows EU Member States to request and share information on various migration-related topics, including irregular migration trends.

It allows policymakers to access timely and relevant information on irregular migration trends, contributing to evidence-based policy development. The system also enables countries to exchange knowledge and methodologies for estimating irregular migration, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon at the European level.