



Irregular migration flows: composition and trends for Germany (2000-2007)

Dita Vogel, Vesela Kovacheva and Norbert Cyrus

State of knowledge

The quantitative importance of different pathways into and out of irregularity cannot be assessed on the basis of the available evidence. Therefore, this summary contains only tentative plausibility considerations, based on the interpretation of quantitative traces of irregular migration in combination with qualitative information (based on Cyrus 2008).

Composition of flows

In the period 2000-2007, it seems plausible that the main path into irregularity was the use of visa-free entry with a subsequent undeclared employment. Other patterns like visa-overstaying or irregular entry without documents may have gained significance in relative terms. Visa overstaying is probably of much more importance than illegal entry. .

In the period between 2000 and 2007, regularisation was no major pathway out of irregularity. Movements out of the country – either to return or to move onwards – seem to be the most important pathway out of irregularity. However, Germany had considerable numbers of irregular residents from new EU member states whose residence – although not employment status - was regularized due to EU enlargement.

➤ Demographic component

There is no quantitative information about birth of children in an irregular status and death of person with irregular status.

➤ Geographic component

Since the 2004 EU-enlargement, Germany is surrounded by EU member states (Poland, Czech Republic, Austria, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark) and Switzerland. It is bordered to the north by the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. Germany is a member of the Schengen area, allowing for free movement to other EU member states.

It is not possible to estimate the size of inflows and outflows over border with published enforcement data. Apprehensions at the border have decreased substantially from about 31 000 in 2000 to 15 000 in 2007. The deportations decreased from 35 444 in 2000 to 9 617 in 2007.

➤ Status related component

There are relatively strict visa issuing practices vis-à-vis third-country nationals subject to visa requirements.

Asylum applications are often lodged by apprehended irregular migrants, resulting in a temporary regularisation for the time of the asylum procedure which may result in a permanent legalisation for accepted refugees. However, most asylum applications are rejected. First asylum applications in this decade declined from 78 565 in 2000 to 19 165 in

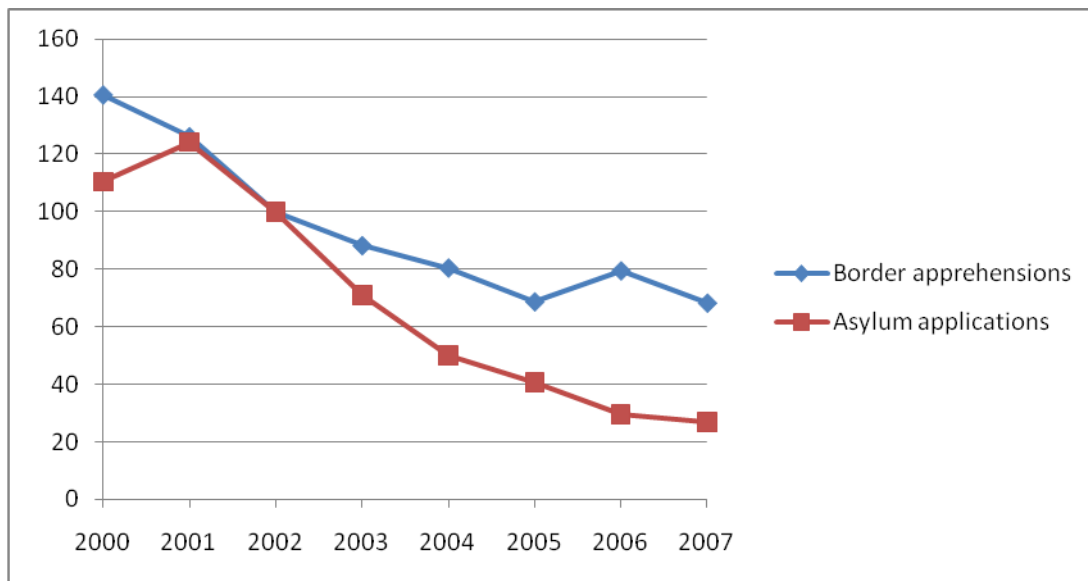
2007. An official recognition of undeportability may be another outflow from irregularity, but it is also often granted after a regular stay or after a rejected asylum application. There is no information how many irregular migrants received a toleration status.

There was no major regular regularisation programme.

Trends

We choose border apprehensions and asylum applications as indicators for flow trends in irregular migration. All indicators are standardized by taking 2001 as a reference year (2001=100).

Figure 1 Standardized indicators of irregular migration flows (2001=100)



Source: Border apprehensions according to Federal police data (Cyrus 2008), first asylum applications (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>)

All indicators point to a sharp decrease since 2001. We are aware that these trend indicators are problematic and partly overlapping as asylum seekers are partly lodged after an apprehension and the stock estimate is mainly based on police apprehensions in the interior. However, they are the best available indicators and no qualitative information is contradicting the statement.

References

Cyrus, N. (2008): Country report Germany: Undocumented Migration Counting the Uncountable. Data and Trends across Europe, December 2008.