



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

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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 (Kraler et al. 2008).

Composition of flows

It seems plausible that non-compliant forms of migration on a circular basis (e.g. repeated entry on tourist visa and illegal work) form the most important feature of irregular migration, both concerning inflows and outflows. Visa overstaying is of comparably minor importance. Irregular entries to Austria have decreased over the past years due to the EU enlargement and the inflow of asylum seekers to Austria.

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.

➤ Demographic component

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

➤ Geographic component

Austria is located in the centre of Europe, and since the 2004 enlargement, is surrounded by EU Member States (Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Italy). Austria borders also on Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Austria is member of the Schengen area, allowing for free movement to other member states.

While border control agents record a number of incidents related to irregular migration, among them irregular entries and rejections at the border, it is not possible to estimate the size of inflows and outflows over border with published enforcement data. Apprehensions in this decade ranged from 42 374 in 2000 to 13 594 in 2008. The registered voluntary returns and deportations account for 12 755 in 2001 to 4 893 in 2008.

➤ Status related component

There are relatively strict visa issuing practices vis-à-vis third-country nationals subject to visa requirements. Substantial financial guarantees are required from sponsors and visa applicants themselves. Visa applicants from countries with ‘high migration risks’ are scrutinized thoroughly. Visa overstaying is probably of less importance than visa abuse from citizens of countries with more liberal practices.

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

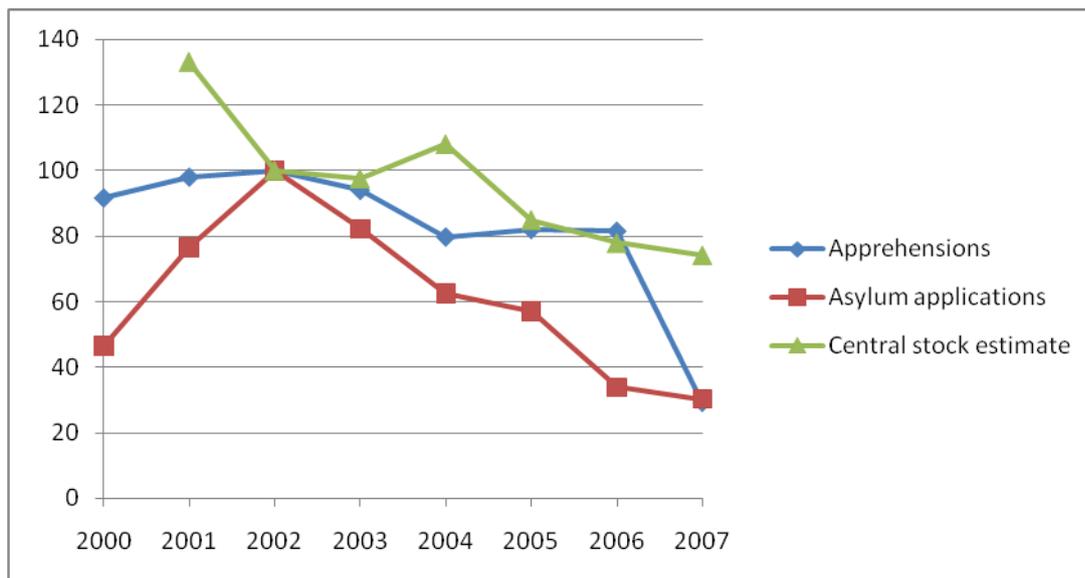
and may lead to irregular residence. Asylum applications in this decade ranged from 30 125 in 2001 to 11 920 in 2007.

There was no major regular regularisation programme. No data is available on persons in a removal procedure whose expulsion is found inadmissible or otherwise not enforceable are issued an 'adjournment of deportation' for a maximum period of one year.

Trends

We choose border apprehensions, asylum applications and stock estimates as indicators for the trend in irregular migration, standardizing by taking the year 2002 as 100.

Figure 1 Standardized indicators of irregular migration flows (2002=100)



Source: Apprehended aliens illegally present (GéDAP 2004, COM 2009), first asylum applications (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>), stock estimates (Jandl 2009)

All indicators point to a sharp decrease since 2002. 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

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