

Making migration work for Europe

Challenges and opportunities for the future

According to latest ESPON results and available data the supply of labour migrants will continue grow steadily, but even more important the demand for labour migrants will increase significantly.

It is estimated that between 2005 and 2050 the total demand for labour migrants will amount to 215 million at a global level. The demand will be particularly strong in Europe where 66 million labour migrants will be needed, compared to 9 million in North America. This will undoubtedly be a major challenge for the EU and require a wide-range of strategic policy initiatives on migration.

Many regions, especially in Eastern and Baltic countries, as well as some remote peripheral areas, will most probably continue losing population mainly as a result of emigration. It is likely that current factors encouraging migration will remain such as demographic and income differences between East-West and North-South.

In some central European countries such as Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary out migration flows towards Western Europe is foreseen to continue to increase and mainly affect high skilled labour force. This trend may pose challenges in these countries in relation to the EUROPE 2020 policy objectives of smart growth in terms of employment and productivity.

Spain, Ireland, Czech Republic and Portugal may also deserve special attention from policy makers, as they moved from being in-migration countries in 2007 to out-migration as a consequence of the economic recession.

At regional level, migration flows from rural to metropolitan regions is expected to increase especially in Poland and Romania which may pose territorial development challenges in relation to population ageing and economic growth. Policy actions aimed at increasing the quality of life in rural areas might play a role in countering out-migration from rural regions in order to ensure their attractiveness both for residents, in particular young woman, and also for visitors.

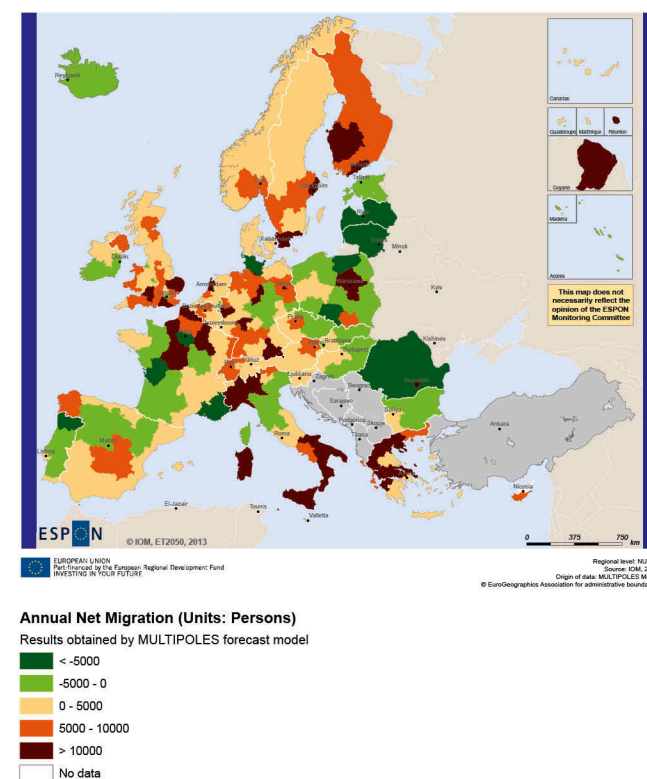
However, basically migration means people making use of the freedom to move within the EU contribute to European integration and to building new links between areas and new development potentials.

Despite the economic and societal challenges migration may cause in the short term, its advantages are mainly to be seen in the long-run. Indeed, migration contributes to generate new skills and experiences acquired by the people moving, and contribute to innovation and entrepreneurial discovery where new backgrounds and cultures meet.

Investments in regions need to take into account the sensitivities of areas facing large positive or negative migration balances, so that these do not erase the potential of these areas to contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Based on the baseline scenario developed by ESPON for 2030, the total migration is expected to continue increasing in Europe (Map 4). However, migration trends from East towards Western Europe might reinforce internal regional imbalances with mainly immigration flows towards economic welfare areas in the core and Northern Europe.

Map 4 – Net migration 2010 – 2030 (baseline scenario)



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Post-crisis migration trends: challenges and opportunities for Europe's competitiveness

Free movement of people is one of the cornerstones of European integration. Increasing mobility of people brings with it both territorial development opportunities and challenges. As a consequence of the global economic crisis migration flows have changed, with territorial impacts on European countries, its regions and cities.

In the light of the Europe 2020 Strategy, migration and mobility is seen as contributing to the competitiveness of the EU, ensuring a labour force with the necessary skills to reinforce the EU's long-term economic development. The programme of the Lithuanian EU Presidency emphasises the need for developing cooperation with EU strategic partners and regions in the field of migration. Furthermore, recent events around the Mediterranean Sea related to flows of irregular migrants towards Europe have increased the attention to migration issues.

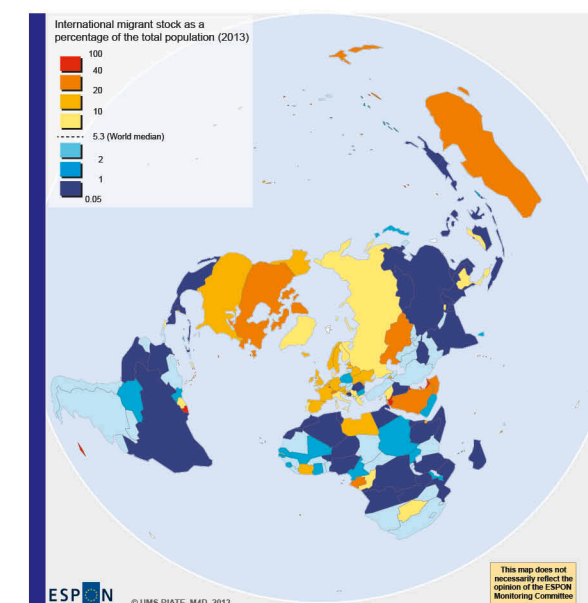
Europe in a moving World

Europe as one of the most attractive regions in the world

Seen from a European perspective, four types of flows shape the map of migration: (1) global migration (world-wide migration flows); (2) European external migration (flows from outside towards Europe and vice-versa); (3) migration flows between European countries and (4) internal regional migration flows (movement of people within a country).

At a global level, migration has been of growing importance as the stock of international migrants increased more than 1/3 between 1990 and 2013, amounting to 3.2% of the world's population in 2013 (232 million people). Europe is still the most attractive region in the world with the largest stock of international migrants (72 million in 2013) (Map 1). This situation is probably related to economic factors and to the political stability of the EU.

Map 1 – Share of international migrants* in total population, 2013



* Persons living outside their countries of birth.

Migration in time of economic recession

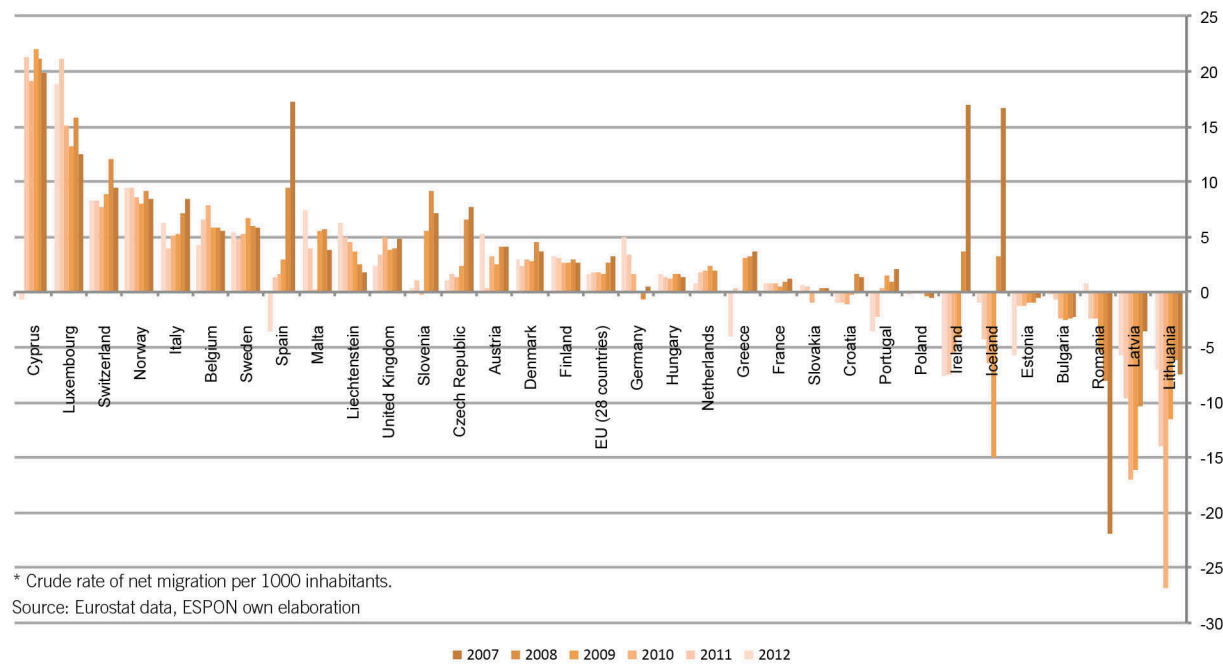
Diverse migration flows in Europe

The current economic recession has had a major impact on the migration flows in Europe. Migration has slowed down and both in-migration and out-migration countries have seen their migratory balance change between 2007 and 2012 (Figure 1). Spain, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Iceland and Portugal were particularly affected, moving from being in-migration to out-migration countries. For countries with high levels of out-migration, the situation has in many cases been further reinforced, e.g. Lithuania and Latvia. A common feature for these countries is the severity of the crisis as seen in drastic falls in GDP and high levels of unemployment. Besides that, the changing migration flows might also be related to the adoption of more restrictive migration policies by some European governments in order to protect their own workforce in the face of increasing unemployment, as well as some countries taking the opposite position, being very open to integrate migrants from other countries.

Equally relevant from a policy point of view is the fact that since 2009-2010 several of the strongest welfare countries in Western Europe have strengthened their in-migration profiles, e.g. Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Belgium, United Kingdom and Finland. In general, migration can contribute to increase territorial cohesion in Europe by reducing regional disparities, labour shortages and maintain economic growth in receiving regions and reduce unemployment in sending regions. Overall, regional differences in migration are strongly related to economic and social conditions as well as accessibility. Thus, more affluent regions, including larger urban agglomerations in central and Eastern Europe, largely gain from migration, whereas more peripheral and economically challenged regions lose out.

The Baltic Sea macro-region illustrates this situation where larger metropolitan areas and second tier cities appear particularly attractive for in-migration flows, registering a positive net-migration (Map 2). Conversely, rural and peripheral areas both in the Eastern and Western part of the Baltic Sea Region have experienced high out-migration with negative effects on the composition of the population in terms of age and gender. This challenging situation is particularly strong in Lithuania and the Eastern parts of Germany.

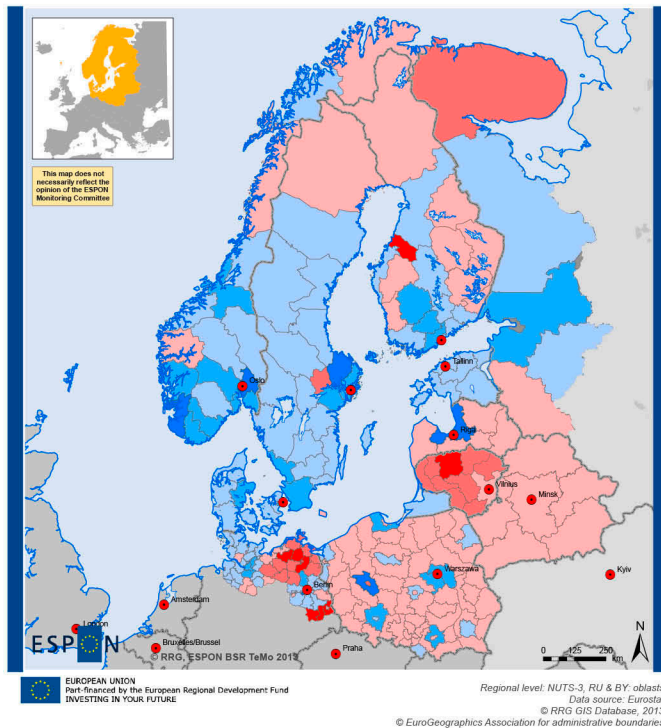
Figure 1 – Net migration* in European countries 2007 – 2012



* Crude rate of net migration per 1000 inhabitants.
Source: Eurostat data, ESPON own elaboration

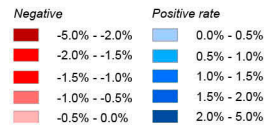
■ 2007 ■ 2008 ■ 2009 ■ 2010 ■ 2011 ■ 2012

Map 2 – Net migration in the Baltic Sea Region 2005 – 2010



Net migration 2005-2010

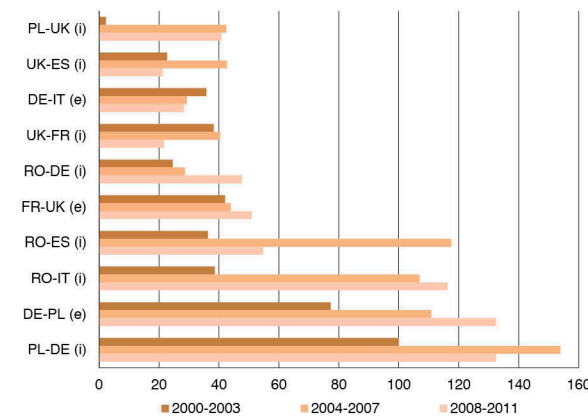
Average annual rate (%)



Migration flows between EU countries changing directions

A considerable part of the international migrants in EU come from non-EU countries. However, an important migration flow in Europe takes place between countries (1.3 million in 2011). From 2008 to 2011 the highest intra-EU migration flow occurred between Germany and Poland. Until the economic crisis hit, out-migration from Poland to Germany dominated, but during the crisis years 2008-2011 this pattern was reversed, i.e. to out-migration from Germany to Poland (Figure 1). As a large majority of the migrants coming from Poland to Germany in the pre-crisis period were men in working age, it means that they largely were labour migrants and most likely many of them returned back due to the unfolding crisis.

Figure 2 – Top ten average annual intra-EU migration flows, 2000 – 2011 (x 1 000)



i=according to country of immigration; e=according to country of emigration.
Source: De Valk, H.A.G., Koelet, S. & Van der Erf, R. (forthcoming). Intra-European migration: background and future of EU mobility. CEMIS: Antwerp.

Regional migration within countries

Gender as additional component of regional migration

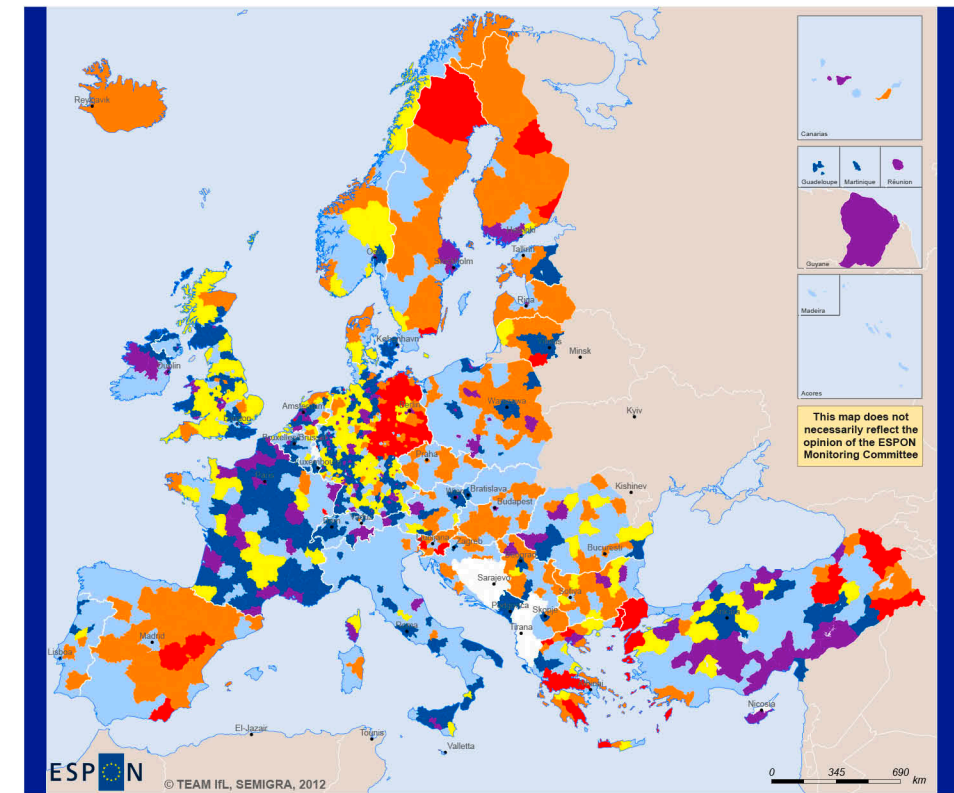
The migration flows within countries are the dominant component of migration in Europe in terms of people changing their location. Migration also largely depends on the socio-economic and demographic structures. Regions with high GDP, good welfare provisions and low unemployment are attractive for migrants, often providing job and study opportunities as well as good access to services of general interest. In these types of regions, such as Luxembourg, the Brussels region, the Öresund Region (Copenhagen – Malmö), migration can support the increase of economic growth and reduce labour shortages.

In contrast, regions with low GDP and high unemployment, in particular among young people detract. As a result, many of these regions are faced with out-migration of qualified and skilled people, such as Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, which poses challenges in terms of

access to human capital, ageing and thereby weakens the region's potential for economic growth.

With regard to demographic structure, some regions suffer from the phenomenon of gender selective migration. For instance, regions with high out-migration of young women display a gender imbalance, which in the long term can have negative impact on the natural population growth. In Europe, a surplus of young adulthood men can be seen in peripheral rural areas, while women outnumber men mainly in urban areas (Map 3). A deficit of women is particularly strong in the Northern part of Sweden, some parts in Spain, Greece, as well as some parts of North-East Germany. In general, the territorial pattern shows that women migrate to a higher degree than men, most often for family and/or career reasons. This might lead to low fertility rates which long-term can increase the region's vulnerability.

Map 3 – Regional gender structures among young adults



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Regional level: NUTS 3
Source: Own calculations, 2011
Origin of data: EUROSTAT and national statistical offices, 2011
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