



EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF

TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION IN TRANSITION: TRANSFORMATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF TEMPORARY MOBILITY OF PEOPLE (EURA-NET)

The objective of EURA-NET is to obtain an understanding of the current characteristics and related policy impact of temporary transnational migration. The flows and patterns of temporary migration in the European-Asian context provide insights that may be relevant to other world regions. Insights from the research are expected to contribute to migration governance and development at national, European and international levels.



EURA-NET will provide practical insights and theoretical analyses of transformation processes underway in highly industrialized societies, transformation countries and developing countries, representing regions sending and receiving migrants, as well as countries of transit.

Evidence-based information will be gathered through a review of policies and interviews with individual migrants (and their family members) and national policy-makers in China, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey and Ukraine, as well as at wider European and international levels.

17.3.2015

INTRODUCTION

EURA-NET seeks to help national, European and international policy-makers to address the challenges caused by temporary transnational migration. This will be done by discovering how politics structure the movement of people in sending, transit and receiving countries and by shedding light on the international practices and experiences of individual people.

EURA-NET will provide **practical insights** and **theoretical analyses** of the transformation processes and development impacts of temporary migration by looking at highly industrialized societies, transformation countries (emerging economies, transition countries) and developing countries. The findings in **the European-Asian context** will provide insights to be applied to other world regions.

EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

The findings show that there is a **lack of statistics and literature** analysing the temporary nature and transnational characteristics of recent migration flows. In many cases no statistical data are available, or the categories of existing statistics do not match the categories of temporary migration. It is particularly difficult to obtain statistical data which are comparable between nation-states, as the definitions and registration procedures for (temporary) migrants differ across countries. The research revealed that there is **no commonly accepted definition** of what is meant by 'temporary migration' and who qualifies as a 'temporary migrant'. The concepts and target groups employed by nation-states are typically dependent on national specificities as regards historical, political, economic and societal backgrounds, as well as on different interests at play in the setting of priorities and formulation of migration policies. Even the term 'migrant' is contested and no universally accepted definition for the term exists.

In the European context, the length of residence permit is often used as an indicator of the permanence or temporariness of a person's migration. This, however, is somewhat misleading. Usually, the statistics refer to first residence permits but one cannot know whether those permits are renewed later on and if so, for how long. Migrants' reasons for their stay may also change over the years or the officially stated reasons may not tell the whole truth about their intentions. Finally, there are several phenomena related to temporary migration where a significant number of individuals do not register with the appropriate authorities, as a consequence of which their migration sojourns do not show up in statistics.

GROWTH IN MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS BETWEEN THE EU AND ASIA

Despite the shortcomings in the existing statistics, the preliminary findings of EURA-NET indicate that, in the context of Asia's growing markets and large and increasingly highly educated population, **temporary migration between the EU and Asia is on the increase**. Not only are growing numbers of Asian highly-skilled and skilled workers, tertiary level students, family migrants and asylum seekers moving to EU Member States, but Europeans have also adopted increasingly mobile transnational lifestyles. Temporary migratory movements of European intra-company transferees, scientists and other experts, tertiary level students, family-based movers and 'life-style migrants' to Asian countries are emerging phenomena, albeit not as numerous. Return migration is also increasing in both directions.

The EURA-NET study of the prevailing situation revealed that, in particular, **the mobility of tertiary level students between the EU and Asia is on the increase**: not merely because Asian students increasingly study at European universities but also because Asia (China in particular) appears as an increasingly attractive destination for European students. Moreover, increasing numbers of asylum seekers and irregular migrants are moving from Asia to the EU, although the true scale of the phenomenon is unknown. It is evident that Turkey is the main corridor for mobility from Asia to the EU. These migratory movements are both regular and irregular. The main migration route from Turkey to Europe goes through Greece. In many cases, migrants stay in Greece longer than planned as they cannot go further to the West. As a consequence, the number of irregular migrants in Greece has increased rapidly in recent years. Many of them have remained totally marginalized and face serious social uncertainty with regard to unemployment, health care, insurance, legalization of their status, and housing.

Similarly, Ukraine is a **transit country** between Asia and Europe. According to the World Migration Report (2013), and based on 2010 data, the Russia-Ukraine migration corridor is the second after the world's largest migration corridor, Mexico-USA. Hungary, too, as a Schengen country, has gained growing importance both for Asian companies planning expansion to Europe and for individuals migrating from Asia to Europe, not just regular migrants but also irregular ones. This state of affairs has recently attracted considerable political and media attention in Hungary. Migration to Hungary is today highly restricted and the policy orientation is defensive. As a consequence, in Hungary, there is a relatively low level of regular immigration, while the number of irregular migrants is relatively high.

The volumes of migratory movements from Asia to the EU and from the EU to Asia are evidently much **out of balance**. Whereas the migration of Asians to the EU has intensified massively, in the light of international statistics, migration from Europe to Asia is almost non-existent. Nevertheless, the picture emerging from the EURA-NET country reports reveals a slight increase in the number of Europeans in Asia. It is also evident that Europeans in Asia reside there on a purely temporary basis (and presumably such is also their intention), while Asian people typically migrate with the intention of settling permanently in Europe but, due to the laws and regulations in the receiving countries, their residence often ends up being temporary.

IN SEARCH OF PREDOMINANT TRENDS IN TEMPORARY MIGRATION

International recruitment practices are key when considering the transformation processes under way in the European-Asian context. In addition to highly-skilled and skilled workers, this concerns tertiary level students. For countries facing real or prospective skill shortages, university students represent 'semi-finished' high-skill workers. People's border-crossing mobility between the EU and Asia is often **pendular**. This is the case, in particular, with migration for economic and employment purposes. People may live in one country and cross a national border on a regular basis to another or they may stay for a short period in the target country, for example, for the harvest season. As an example, many migrants from Thailand regularly move to Europe to work in agriculture, services and construction.

People's border-crossing movements are not just about a flow between two countries; much **circulation** also occurs. In particular, Chinese and Indian high-tech professionals often are 'citizens of the world', whose main objective is to pursue career opportunities that will enable them to maximize their earnings and savings. Transnationally mobile people and the transnational social spaces they gradually create transform not only socio-economic conditions but also wider social patterns. The growing role of transnational familial ties and networks is an example in this respect. People leaving their country for purposes of employment or family reasons are not the only groups of transnational movers who want to improve their quality of life. **Lifestyle migration** is a many-sided phenomenon whereby people (typically citizens of affluent industrialized nations) move, permanently or temporarily, to countries with lower living costs (incl. cheaper property prices) and sunny climates. For example, Thailand attracts increasing numbers of retirees, medical tourists and other lifestyle migrants from Europe. Although the phenomenon is relatively small as far as numbers are concerned, lifestyle migration appears to be an emerging trend in the European-Asian context.

TEMPORARY MIGRATION AS A CHALLENGE FOR MIGRATION POLICY

The EURA-NET research revealed many **problems in the integration and adaptation paths of temporary migrants** in migrant-receiving EU countries. A common feature identified in the country reports was that existing national concepts and framings of 'temporary migration' allow states to limit access to rights, security of residence and socio-economic inclusion of people on the move, thereby increasing their vulnerability, deprivations and dependency with regard migration regulations and official documents like visas and residence permits. Visas are used as a common tool for states to restrictively manage mobility as temporary migration.

A selective and utilitarian rationale (needs-based assessment) by a national government in terms of defining migratory regimes as 'temporary' was identified in a number of countries taking part in EURA-NET. In all countries under investigation, including those in Asia, the migration policy was characterized as a **policy of national interests and national security**. Short-termism predominates in the rationale underlying these migration policies - with national security constituting a key driving force. The research also revealed a mismatch between labour market situations and the way in which national norms/laws frame temporary migratory movements: while EU countries try to recruit highly-skilled professionals from Asia and other continents, selective regulations and bureaucratic practices impair their attractiveness in the global competition for talent. At the same time as EU countries try to recruit highly-skilled professionals from Asia,

China seeks to attract highly skilled experts from abroad to China. In 2004 China designed a new programme entitled Regulations on the Examination and Approval of the Permanent Residence of Aliens in China to attract foreign experts and facilitate foreign investments in the country. Although only a few people are admitted annually through the programme, in recent years, there has been a minor increase in human mobility from Europe to China. In most cases these migratory movements have been temporary in nature.

The regulation of human mobility as temporary migration, in particular that for employment purposes, shows a direct relationship with **irregularity of entry and stay** (often negatively referred to as 'illegal immigration') of those whose socio-economic characteristics do not perfectly match with the national framings or criteria of 'temporariness'. For most countries in Asia, temporary labour migration (particularly for those in 'less-skilled' occupations) does not lead to permanent residence but is rather subject to constant contract renewal. Moreover, as described in the country report on China, the temporary migration requirements are often so strict that very few people qualify for regular temporary entry and stay. When these people no longer meet the legal criteria for a temporary sojourn, they fall into irregularity and exclusion and are subject to expulsion and return policies. The logic of temporariness concerns in particular migrants classified as 'low skilled', but is gradually expanding or even affecting larger groups of migrant categories. The situation described in some of the European and Asian countries at times exemplifies a move by which even those migrants classified as 'highly skilled' are increasingly subject to temporary migratory regimes. This is often the case when the role of national government in the regulation of migration is more limited and where corporations or business actors have a more prominent role.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT AS A CHALLENGE

In addition to national policies, the EURA-NET research examined an expanding range of European, international and Asian standards, policy documents and regional processes which engage in different ways in the framing of cross-border human movements as 'temporary migration'. The resulting picture in the EU is characterized by a **fragmented matrix of European migration directives and regulations** stipulating a sectorial set of rules across a dispersed field of pieces of legislation. These exist in parallel with a set of heterogeneous Member States migration-related national policies and statuses, some of which are even in competition among one another, and deviate from common EU standards. Still, EURA-NET research highlighted that the emerging common European policy framework is having profound consequences on the participating Member States' autonomy when framing mobility as 'temporary migration' and limiting access to rights and labour standards, security of residence and non-discrimination of third-country workers falling into 'temporary' categories.

The study of Asian countries' policies on temporary migration covered **Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs)** on various topics related to migration in Asia. These supranational processes show inter-state cooperation for understanding, framing and regulating human mobility as temporary migration. Illustrative examples include, for example, the Bali Process, the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue. RCPs play a key role in achieving a 'regional position' and in the transfer of ideas and policy agendas through networking, depoliticization (Ministerial consultations) and exchange of good practices. The informal, non-binding nature of RCPs provides a space where parties with otherwise divergent interests and agendas can be in dialogue with each other. They importantly create a 'common language/discourse' and setting of priorities regarding 'temporariness' and mobility as 'temporary migration' as a result of meetings, interaction and 'sharing of concerns, perspectives and best practices'.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) enable further intra-regional processes in the Asian region. There have been also several initiatives aimed at achieving greater cooperation and reform in the governance of migration and the free movement of skilled labour. The 2007 ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers and the 2012 Task Force on ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (TF-AQRF) are excellent examples here. Yet many challenges remain in the realization of ASEAN objectives in protecting migrant workers and the implementation of mutual recognition arrangements on professional services.

QUESTIONS STILL TO BE ANSWERED

It should be noted that the data collection of the EURA-NET research on transformative characteristics of temporary migration is just starting and new research findings will emerge in the phases to come, which are expected to further substantiate some of the above-mentioned initial findings. Secondly, the research on the ways in which EU policies are handling the challenges identified in the state-of-the-art reports on the prevailing situation, and summarized in this Brief, will also be explored during the project, and EURA-NET is expected to contribute to these debates at the European level.

KEY FINDINGS IN SUMMARY

- A lack of information in the existing scholarly literature on what is deemed as temporary migration;
- Increasing and ever more complex nature of cross-border mobility between the EU and Asia framed as 'temporary';
- An increase in the mobility of tertiary level students between the EU and Asia;
- The challenges in the integration and inclusion paths of non-nationals classified as 'temporary migrants' in migrant-receiving countries;
- A predominantly selective and utilitarian approach/rationale mainly driven by considerations of national security which does not lead to permanent residence, and does not ensure equality of treatment and non-discrimination; and
- A fragmented matrix of normative understandings and framings in the EU and international standards as regards what migration is deemed temporary human mobility.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings of EURA-NET reveal that there is a mismatch between the labour market needs and the ways in which state norms/laws frame temporary migratory movements. Most EU countries are not prepared for the fact that transnational familial relationships entail short-term migratory movements. In cases in which the migrants' children or other family members remain at home, internationally recruited labour often ends up being temporary or circular.

The suitability of family reunification schemes and of other policy provisions for the needs of short-term migrants require review.

Short-termism is the dominant rationale underlying current migration policies. The EURA-NET study has shown that most of the country systems under analysis are not equipped to face migratory phenomena falling outside 'permanent migration', such as issues related to the rights of short-term migrants, family matters and socio-economic integration questions.

There is a need to scrutinize the consequences of current migration policies for temporary migrants and their socioeconomic inclusion.

In migrant-sending Asian countries, there is an increasing number of reintegration programmes and practical policies targeting overseas-based nationals and return migrants. At least to some extent, these policies have been successful. In the face of increasing temporary migratory movements from the EU, European countries should pay attention to the reintegration of returnees.

There is an increasing need to pay attention to the reintegration of returnees in EU Member States.

The EURA-NET study revealed that while border-crossing migratory processes involve several nation-states, the registration procedures for temporary migrants differ across countries. This gravely inhibits cross-country comparisons and international collaboration in policymaking. In particular, there is a need to compile statistics on emerging types of temporary migratory movements (such as lifestyle migration). Additional information is also needed on Europeans' migration to Asia.

Emerging types of border-crossing movements need to be scrutinized.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

The main objectives of the project are:

- ❖ To compile an inventory of the quality and extent of temporary transnational migration and mobility and of related policies in the European-Asian context (WP1)

The findings provide an inventory of the existing research on the issue, existing statistical data on transnational migration and mobility, and a review of the national and international initiatives and programmes on temporary migration.

- ❖ To conduct a multi-level analysis of the transformative characteristics and development impacts of temporary transnational migration and mobility at local, national and international levels (WP2)

The research data will be gathered through **semi-structured interviews** among people with experiences of temporary cross-border movements between Europe and Asia and/or other transborder connections or activities in the European-Asian transnational social space. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted in China, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey and Ukraine, with 80 respondents in each country. The target groups include highly skilled (academics, corporate workers, e.g.), low-skilled workers (e.g. seasonal workers in agriculture, construction or services), foreign degree students, people moving for family reasons, humanitarian movers (refugees, asylum seekers), 'lifestyle seekers' (e.g. retirees), irregular migrants, returnees and migrants' family members.

Secondly, interview data will be gathered through **structured interviews** with policy-makers, authorities and civil society actors dealing with migration issues in China, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey and Ukraine. The number of respondents in each participating country will be 40-60. In each country a policy informing workshop will be organized by the project staff in order to plan future research work in collaboration with local and national authorities, policy-makers, NGOs and migrant organizations. These workshops will be key in delivering information about the study to the potential target groups of respondents.

- ❖ To investigate legal and policy frameworks and their impacts at European, national, international and global levels (WP3)

This third step will be accomplished in order to analyse the present and future impacts of temporary mobility in the EU and third countries, and to produce a set of policy proposals and recommendations for addressing European governance of temporary migration and mobility. The research will scrutinize the governance of European initiatives and programmes for the temporary migration of third-country nationals to Europe, including EU mobility partnerships. Parallels will be drawn between similar forms of temporary mobility from countries and regions outside the EU, looking in particular at their impacts on host Member States and countries of origin and on the EU more generally.

PROJECT IDENTITY

PROJECT NAME	Transnational Migration in Transition: Transformative Characteristics of Temporary Mobility of People (EURA-NET)
COORDINATOR	Professor Pirkko Pitkänen, University of Tampere, Finland, pirkko.pitkanen@uta.fi
CONSORTIUM	Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) Brussels, Belgium Beijing Normal University (BNU), School of Social Development and Public Policy, Beijing, China University of Tampere (UTA), School of Education, Tampere, Finland Bielefeld University (UNIBI), Center on Migration, Citizenship and Development (COMCAD), Bielefeld, Germany University of Macedonia (UoM), The Economic and Social Sciences, Thessaloniki, Greece Economic Research Institute (KOPINT-TARKI), Budapest, Hungary Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Trivandrum, India Maastricht University (UM), the Graduate School of Law, Maastricht, Netherlands Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC), Manila, Philippines Mahidol University (MU), Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR), Bangkok, Thailand Koç University (KU), Migration Research Center at Koç University (MiReKoc), Istanbul, Turkey Ethnology Institute of National Academy of Sciences (NASU), Lviv, Ukraine
FUNDING SCHEME	Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities, Collaborative project
DURATION	February 2014 - January 2017 (36 months)
BUDGET	EU contribution: 2,497,496 €
WEBSITE	www.uta.fi/aura-net/
FOR MORE INFORMATION	Project Manager Virve Kallioniemi-Chambers, virve.kallioniemi-chambers@uta.fi Researcher Jaakko Hyytiä, jaakko.hyytia@uta.fi
FURTHER READING	Pirkko Pitkänen and Sergio Carrera (eds.) 2014. TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION IN TRANSITION: STATE OF THE ART REPORT ON TEMPORARY MIGRATION. Collected Working Papers from the EURA-NET project. www.uta.fi/edu/en/research/projects/aura-net/publications.html Pirkko Pitkänen and Mari Korpela (eds.) 2015. CHARACTERISTICS OF TEMPORARY TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION. Collected Working Papers from the EURA-NET project. www.uta.fi/edu/en/research/projects/aura-net/publications.html