Glossary of key terms used in Destination Europe

This glossary explains 16 key terms used in the Destination Europe learning tool.[1] For more comprehensive and legally precise definitions see the [Glossary of the European Migration Network](#)[2] and [Key Migration Terms of the International Organization for Migration](#).[3] Links under each term provide suggestions of additional sources in English.

1. Asylum seeker and refugee
2. Brain-drain
3. Detention centres
4. Discrimination
5. European Commissioner for Home Affairs
6. Host-country compensation
7. Immigrant integration
8. Irregular migration
9. Public opinion about migration
10. Regular migration pathways
11. Regularisation / Amnesty
12. Resettlement programmes
13. Return
14. Schengen area
15. Smuggling and trafficking of migrants
16. UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

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[1] The print-and-play version and additional information about the tool are available at destinationeurope.uni.lu.

[2] https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_en The EMN Glossary Version 6.0 is also available for download as a mobile app in English, Finnish, German, Italian and Latvian for Android and iOS users.

[3] https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms

1. Asylum seeker and refugee

Asylum seekers are people who make a formal request for international protection in another country because they fear their life is at risk in their home country. International law recognizes the following reasons for granting someone a refugee status: fear of persecution based on ethnicity, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Not every **asylum seeker** will be recognized as a **refugee**, but every recognized **refugee** was initially an **asylum seeker**.

The full definition of 'a refugee' in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Geneva Convention) and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, p.14-16: https://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html
Latest data on asylum seekers and recognised refugees in the EU: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics
Global data on refugees and asylum seekers from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR): https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/

2. Brain-drain

A situation when a country loses many, especially skilled, workers in a specific occupation or an economic sector because they emigrate to work in another country. For example, if too many nurses leave to work abroad, it could be a problem for hospitals and patients in their country of origin. However, if the migrants return home with new skills this can have positive impacts on their country of origin. Their home country also benefits from the money they send to their families (the so-called '**remittances'**) and other forms of investment.

Latest data collected by the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (World Bank) on remittances sent by migrants to their home countries: https://www.knomad.org/data/remittances

3. Detention centres

In the EU context, these are specialised facilities that keep people from non-EU countries who are about to be returned to their country of origin. Migrants are detained in these closed

centres in particular when there is a risk that they might try to avoid returning by disappearing or otherwise obstructing the return procedure. According to international human rights law, detention in the migration context should only be used as a last resort, when an alternative solution cannot be applied.

> Latest data on the number of migrants detained in different countries gathered by the non-profit organisation Global Detention Project
> https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/regions-subregions/europe

4. Discrimination

A situation in which one person is treated worse than another in a comparable situation because of characteristics like their ethnic origin, nationality or migration status. It is well documented that immigrants and their descendants face discrimination across the EU and in all areas of life, most often when looking for a job and housing.

> Results of a 2017 survey on EU Minorities and Discrimination by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/second-european-union-minorities-and-discrimination-survey-main-results

5. European Commissioner for Home Affairs

It is a member of the European Commission responsible for proposing and implementing EU migration policy. The mission of the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs for the period 2019 to 2024 is to find common ground among the EU Member States and initiate a fresh start on migration and asylum that could unite EU countries around common values and humanitarian responsibilities.

> **Ylva Johansson** is the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs for the period 2019 – 2024. More on her responsibilities and latest actions:
> https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/johansson_en

6. Host-country compensation

An idea that countries outside the EU willing to host irregular migrants and asylum seekers sent back from the EU could receive some form of financial compensation from the EU or get easier access to the EU for their citizens. It is not an official EU policy systematically applied to manage migration. Rather, some individual EU countries carry out negotiations with migrants' countries of origin or transit to strengthen their border control.

More about different aspects of this practice in Europe and other parts of the world:
https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/10/what-externalization-and-why-it-threat-refugees

7. Immigrant integration

A process of mutual adaptation by migrants and the societies in which they live. Migrants are incorporated into the social, economic, cultural and political life of the receiving community that also changes due to their presence. Integration means a set of joint responsibilities for migrants and communities in which they settle. It does not always have to mean permanent residence of immigrants. Key elements of integration are migrants' access to different kinds of rights and services such as education and the labour market, and recognition of a core set of values that bind migrants and receiving communities together.

For a comparative overview of different dimensions of integration and integration policies in the EU and many other countries, see an interactive website of MIPEX: Migrant Integration Policy Index: https://www.mipex.eu

8. Irregular migration

Is a cross-border movement of people that takes place outside the laws that govern entry into a country of transit or destination. The fact that some people migrate outside recognized migration channels does not mean that the states they transit through, or settle in, do not have an obligation to protect their rights. Refugees, victims of trafficking or unaccompanied migrant children can be among people who use irregular routes. Under international law, states must provide access to international protection for asylum seekers who flee persecution, conflict or generalized violence. In addition, international law protects refugees from being penalized for irregular entry or stay if they have travelled from a place where they were at risk.

For data about irregular migration see the Migration Data Portal of the International Organization for Migration (IOM): https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/irregular-migration

9. Public opinion about migration

Attitudes towards immigrants and immigration are rooted in individuals' values and their general view of the world. Although the public may not have accurate information about the number and profile of migrants living in their country, their opinion on migration can shape governments' policies and can even influence the outcomes of elections. Public opinion on migration also impacts on the environment into which immigrants integrate in the receiving community.

Many countries collect data on public opinion on migration and this data can be a useful indicator of how open or closed receiving societies are towards immigration. Perhaps surprisingly, recent Eurobarometer data shows that in wealthier EU countries about half of people are neither for nor against migration, but somewhere in the middle. Anti-migrant attitudes tend to be strongest in countries with least migrants, where people don't have personal experiences with immigrants but may have stronger feelings of general insecurity and a lower sense of control over their own economic or social situation.

For overview of different public opinion surveys on immigration see the Migration Data Portal of the International Organization for Migration (IOM): https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/public-opinion-migration

For two recent studies on the topic that include data on EU countries see:

- Overseas Development Institute working paper: Public attitudes towards immigration and immigrants, 2020: https://odi.org/en/publications/public-attitudes-towards-immigration-and-immigrants-what-people-think-why-and-how-to-influence-them/
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung study: Still divided but more open: Mapping European attitudes towards migration before and after the migration crisis, 2019: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/still-divided-but-more-open-mapping-european-attitudes-towards-migration-before-and-after-the-migration-crisis

10. Regular migration pathways

Regular migration complies with the laws of the country of origin, transit and destination. Special schemes (pathways) exist in EU member states that allow eligible persons to migrate from outside the EU regularly, under certain conditions and sometimes for a specified duration. For example, migration for purposes of work, education or family reunification. Other pathways respond to the needs of people in vulnerable situations such as refugees, people compelled to leave their country due to natural disasters or the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. Examples of pathways for migrants in vulnerable situations include humanitarian visas and humanitarian admission programmes, private sponsorships programmes, family reunification schemes or medical evacuations to name a few. Opening of regular migration pathways is often called for as an alternative to irregular migration.

Read more about legal migration to the EU in a briefing by the European Parliamentary Research Service, 2019:
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635559/EPRS_BRI(2019)635559_EN.pdf

11. Regularisation / Amnesty

In the EU context, regularisation is a state procedure by which irregularly staying non-EU nationals may apply for a legal residence status in their host country. When there are limited possibilities for legal migration from outside the EU, but there is a strong demand for migrant labour and migrants can find their way into the country irregularly, this typically leads to an increase in the number of irregular migrants living in that country. Also, in exceptional circumstances, such as the one created by the COVID-19 pandemic, migrants who previously held legal status can find themselves in a precarious situation and possibly lose their right to reside in the country.

To address these issues, some governments decide to set certain conditions under which irregular migrants can obtain a regular status. This is, however, a controversial solution. On the one hand, moving foreign workers from informal to formal employment is good both for the workers and for the receiving society. On the other hand, it could be seen as rewarding irregular migration and as unjust from the perspective of those migrants waiting to come to the EU through regular channels.

For more on addressing the illegal employment of foreign workers in different countries see the OECD International Migration Outlook 2018, pages 176, 178 & 186: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2018_migr_outlook-2018-en#page1

12.   Resettlement programmes

In the EU context, these are voluntary programmes under which EU countries provide international protection in their territories to refugees and displaced persons who have been identified as eligible for resettlement by the United Nations' Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Globally, resettlement is a way to protect refugees who have no option to integrate locally or return to their home country. It involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a state in which they have sought protection to a third state that has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status. This status gives them and their close family members protection and access to rights like those enjoyed by nationals. They should also have the opportunity to eventually become citizens of the country that resettled them.

For more on resettlement of refugees in the EU see the European Parliament report, 2019: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2016)589859

For global data on resettlement by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR): https://www.unhcr.org/resettlement-data.html?query=resettlement

13.   Return

The movement of a migrant from a host country back to their country of origin, nationality or habitual residence after spending a significant period of time in the host country. Returns can be voluntary or forced, assisted or spontaneous. It is an expression of a state's sovereignty to decide who enters and remains on the territory. A state can therefore remove migrants but several principles of international law, and most notably the principle of 'non-refoulement', limit a state's powers in this regard. Non-refoulement is a principle that prohibits states from returning a person to a country where his or her life or freedom would be threatened. International law also sets standards for the way in which removals are carried out. They should preserve the dignity of the individual and the use of force should be exceptional, limited to what is reasonably necessary. They should never endanger the life or physical integrity of the individual.

Latest EU-27 data on the enforcement of immigration legislation, including returns: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics_on_enforcement_of_immigration_legislation?oldid=264452#Returns_of_non-EU_citizens

For global data on return migration with the focus on voluntary return see the Migration Data Portal of the International Organization for Migration (IOM): https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/return-migration

14. Schengen area

It is an area that currently comprises most EU countries and some non-EU countries (see the *map* included in the *Destination Europe* box). Under normal circumstances, there are no internal border checks between countries that are part of the Schengen area. EU citizens and anyone legally present in the EU, including non-EU nationals, can freely circulate without being subjected to border controls. The Schengen Borders Code allows Member States to temporarily reintroduce border control at the internal borders in the event of a serious threat to public policy or internal security. But it is meant as a last resort measure, to be used in exceptional situations and should only be used for limited time.

To learn more about the Schengen Area, the countries it covers and related policies see a dedicated European Commission website: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen_en

15. Smuggling and trafficking of migrants

The international law defines migrant **smuggling** as the procurement of the illegal entry of a person into a state of which he or she is not a national or permanent resident. Such entry is organised to obtain a financial or other material benefit. **Smuggling** is normally consensual and happens across borders. It is sometimes confused with **human trafficking**. There are many similarities but in contrast to **smuggling**, **trafficking** involves serious exploitation. **Human trafficking** may also occur within a country's territory. However, in practice, it may be hard to establish the boundary between the two. Exploitation and abuse of migrants can take place during transit or at destination even if there was an initial consensus on their part. **Smuggling** can lead to **trafficking**. **Smuggling** and **trafficking** can also take place on the same

routes. The important difference is that while **human trafficking** is generally considered a crime against an individual, **smuggling** is a crime against the state.

For more detail and data on smuggling see the Migration Data Portal of the International Organization for Migration (IOM): https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/smuggling-migrants

For EU actions against smuggling by the Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre see: https://www.europol.europa.eu/about-europol/european-migrant-smuggling-centre-emsc#fndtn-tabs-0-bottom-1

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16.   UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

An agency of the United Nations which provides help to refugees, displaced communities and stateless people in 135 countries.

For more about the organisation and what it does, see the UNHRC website: https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do.html

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