Migrations in Our Common Home

Forecasting for Change

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Contents

Introduction

This is the third policy briefing produced by the Roundtable on Migration in Our Common Home, a collective of organisations and individuals concerned about the shape of migration policy in Ireland and internationally.

The first policy briefing, *Migrations in Our Common Home: Responding with Care – Ireland's response to the Ukrainian crisis*,[1] considered how the response to Ukrainian migrants following the implementation of the Temporary Protection Direction, albeit with reservations, might become a blueprint for a human-rights-based approach to migration policy. Our second policy briefing, titled Planning for Change: Climate Change and Migration,[2] detailed the Roundtable's response to discussions during COP27 as it drew to a close: it proposed that in order to manage migration we would have to look beyond domestic policy and, while acknowledging that migration is and has always been a fact of life, take steps to alleviate harmful and unwanted drivers of migration and displacement, specifically highlighting the need for greater clarity in respect of the interaction between Overseas Development Assistance, Climate Finance and Loss and Damage.

Migration has been part and parcel of the human experience since the beginning, and while Irish society's historic experience of emigration has had the greater impact on our national identity, immigration too has always been part of the Irish story. Yet, with multiple crises of supply – be they housing, hospital bed or waiting lists – and as communities feel themselves facing increased competition for basic services (giving oxygen to politics oriented towards recrimination rather than solutions), it is more important than ever that a human rights-based approach is at the centre of Government policy.

In this, our third policy briefing, we look at the recent trends in immigration to Ireland and explore how we might use forecasting to better plan for future inflows of migrants and ensure we take a human rights based approach, ensuring that all people have access to appropriate accommodation; decent services and infrastructure; the right to participate in society and to maintain an adequate income; and the right to feel safe.

Ireland and Immigration – Recent Trends

Ireland has a long history of both inward and outward migration. It is important to also note that, even while Irish people were emigrating to find a better life and more opportunities elsewhere, immigration from countries outside of Ireland continued.

Immigration into Ireland in 2022 was the second highest since 1996 (CSO, 2022). In 2022, 120,700 people came to Ireland, 91,800 with nationalities other than Irish. In 2007, these figures were 151,100 and 120,400 respectively (Chart 1).

Due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, there was a sharp increase in immigrants largely from Ukraine in 2022, an increase of 85 per cent on the previous year.[3]

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[1] See https://www.socialjustice.ie/publication/migrations-our-common-home-responding-care-irelands-response-ukrainian-crisis

[2] See https://www.socialjustice.ie/publication/planning-change-climate-change-and-migration

[3] Described by the Central Statistics Office as 'other nationalities' outside the UK or the EU.

Chart 1: Estimated Immigration (,000), 1996-2022
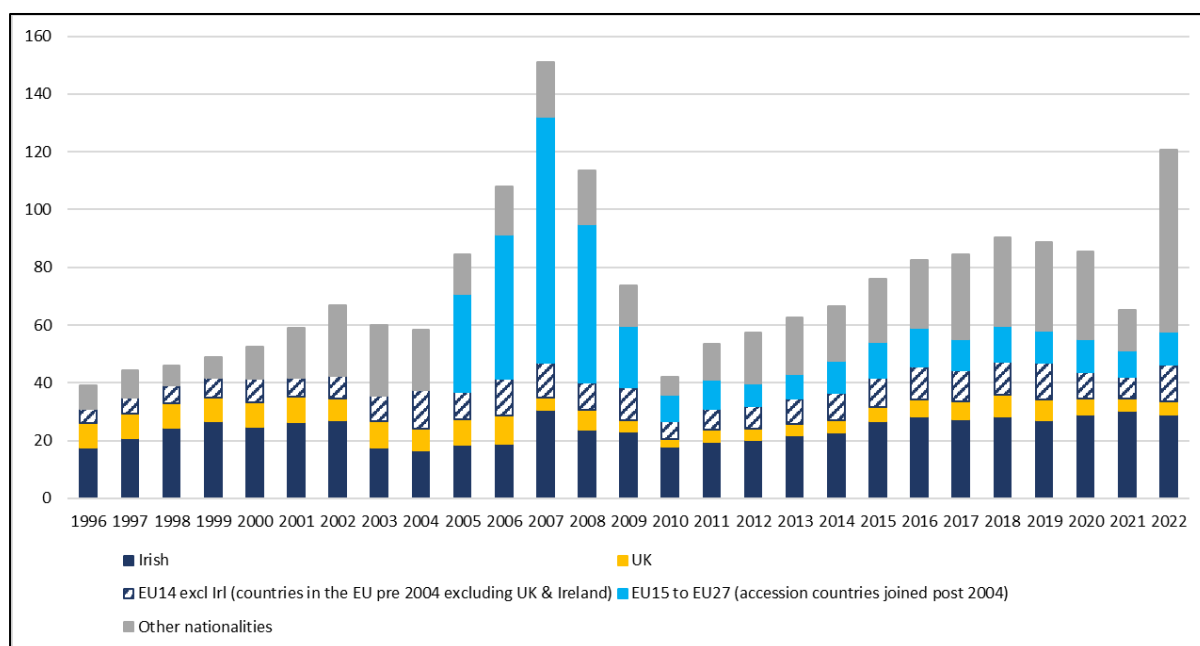
Source: CSO Estimated Immigration (Persons in April), PxStat: PEA17

In 2008, the proportion of immigrants of Other nationalities was 16 per cent of all immigrants. This decreased slightly in 2010 (at the height of the economic recession in Ireland) to 14 per cent, before increasing to, and remaining at or near, 30 per cent in the years 2012 to 2016. Between 2017 and 2020, immigrants from Other nationalities accounted for approximately 35 per cent of all immigrants to Ireland. It may be assumed that in the absence of Covid-19 travel restrictions, this would have continued in subsequent years. Instead, both the overall number of immigrants to Ireland and the proportion from Other nationalities fell in 2021 (when immigration from Other nationalities accounted for 22 per cent of the 65,200 total). In 2022, 52 per cent of immigrants to Ireland were from Other nationalities.

Understanding Migration

In our paper, Migrations in Our Common Home: Responding with Care – Ireland's response to the Ukrainian crisis, published in May 2022, we considered some questions arising from Ireland's response to the crisis in Ukraine, and set out recommendations for Ireland's international protection policy. That paper asked the questions: "Do we have a category 'deserving refugee' and another category 'undeserving refugee', and, if we do, how do we distinguish between them?"

These questions remain pertinent in the context of forecasting migration into the future. It is also important to stress that there are different drivers of migration and displacement for individuals. As set out in more detail below, and explained in Table 1, this paper takes the broad category of 'migrant' to include both people fleeing persecution and human rights abuse, and those voluntarily choosing to move from one country to another. The increase in migrants to Ireland in 2007 was due in part to the increase in construction activity at that time. Migrants were valued on the basis of their anticipated contribution to the economy. A specific contribution was made possible for migrants from 10 eastern European countries through the accession of their originating country to the EU. More recently, refugees fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine were, at least initially, welcomed and encouraged to participate in economic activity here through the mechanisms provided under the EU's Temporary Protection Directive.

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Building on those previous questions, another emerges in the context of this paper: How do we ensure that we are taking a human-rights-based approach to the treatment of migrants, planning for the future to ensure an inclusive, integrated society for all? For a human-rights-based approach to be possible, it is important to understand the reasons for migration, both voluntary, where the will and choice of the migrant is the decisive factor; and involuntary, which involves a wide range of situations in which individuals have varying levels of agency in deciding whether or not to move from their current place of residence (Hugo, 1996).

Drivers of Migration

In its 'Glossary on Migration', the International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines drivers as follows:

> A complex set of interlinking factors that influence an individual, family or population group's decisions relating to migration, including displacement.
>
> **Note:** The concept of "drivers of migration" is dynamic, reflecting an interaction of personal, social, structural, environmental and circumstantial factors working in tandem with local, national, regional and global level incentives and constraints. Drivers influence the decisions to migrate, whether the migration is internal or international, regular or irregular, and/or temporary or permanent; and they operate along a continuum between voluntary and involuntary movement. Given a lack of agreed terminology, academics, policy-makers and practitioners often use the terms "drivers" and "root causes" synonymously to describe the underlying conditions or accumulation of grievances that progressively compel movement, including displacement. Drivers can also be understood as a broader term that encompasses "root causes".
>
> Also often referred to as "determinants of migration", drivers can include a positive desire for change, entrepreneurship, skills transfer, family reunification, cultural expectations, and filling labour demands abroad, and/or include responding to sudden shocks, slow onset pressures, or chronic hardships, such as those associated with underdevelopment, poverty, food insecurity, poor governance, disasters, climate change, environmental degradation, cultural factors, inequalities, persecution, human rights violations, armed conflicts, violence or serious disturbances of public order, among others.

(IOM, 2019)

Figure 1: Continuum of Migration

There is a wide variety of reasons why people may wish, or be forced, to migrate. For example, climate change displaces an estimated 21.6 million people, on average, every year and can indirectly increase the risks associated with violent conflict, something we discussed in detail in our previous paper

(Roundtable on Migration in Our Common Home, 2022). In turn, there are several causes of conflict-driven migration, including climate-based drivers such as resource scarcity and drought (Gleick, 2014).

The European Parliament refer to "push and pull" factors: with push factors the reasons people leave a country and pull factors the reasons they migrate to a particular country[4].

They go on to enumerate three push and pull factors:

- Socio-political factors;
- Demographic and economic factors; and
- Environmental factors.

Socio-political factors, such as wars or persecution, lead to what is known as "forced displacement", described by the UNHCR as displacement resulting from "persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order."[5]; or "forced migration", which is similarly described by Hugo as being "faced with serious harm or death if they remain where they currently live"[6]. It is fair to say that migrants from Ukraine, Syria, and Afghanistan are being pushed by socio-political factors.

Demographic and economic factors, then, depend on the age or socio-economic profile of a region. Pull factors here, according to the European Parliament, include improved opportunities, a higher standard of living, and higher wages. These types of pull factors were evident in Ireland in 2007, when 151,100 migrants entered the country, the highest number recorded. 56 per cent of these migrants were from accession countries which joined the EU post-2004, namely Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. The boom in construction activity at the time, and the shortage of construction labour, may explain why the current anti-immigrant sentiment and far-right rhetoric was not such a prominent feature then.

Environmental factors include the impact of climate change, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and other extreme weather events. The earthquake in Syria and Turkey, and floods in Pakistan are recent examples here. It must be noted, in this context, that most migrants "pushed" by environmental factors such as these are either internally displaced, that is, moving within their own country, or displaced to neighbouring countries.

Migration, whether emigration or immigration, is neither a temporary feature nor a singular event in modern society, and so it must be planned for as part of demographic change. Proper demographic planning requires an understanding of the needs of all those who make up our society; the various contributions we each make; and the support needs we each may have over the course of our lives. Incorporating all types of migration into this process ensures that the varying needs of migrants is taken into account. It is therefore necessary to look beyond the catch-all term of 'migrant' to the various categories included within this term (Table 1).

These categories are important within the context of forecasting as, depending on the reason for the migration, the response of the State must differ.

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[4] Exploring migration causes – why people migrate | News | European Parliament (europa.eu)
[5] https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/publications/brochures/62a9d1494/global-trends-report-2021.html
[6] Graeme Hugo, 'Environmental Concerns and International Migration' (Spring 1996) 30(1) International Migration Review 105, 107.

Table 1: Categories of Migrant

Asylum Seeker	An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualised procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognised as a refugee, but every recognised refugee is initially an asylum seeker.[7] Even if a person seeking international protection is not recognised as a refugee under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, there may be other reasons why they cannot be returned to their country of origin, for example if they would face torture (as set out in the 1984 UN Convention Against Torture). Such individuals may be granted humanitarian protection or other form of legal status recognising the risks they may face.
Immigrant	From the perspective of the country of arrival, a person who moves into a country other than that of his or her nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.[8]
Internally Displaced People (IDPs)	Persons who have not crossed a state border, but rather have been displaced within the boundaries of their country. (UNHCR, 2022)[9]
Migrant	An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally-defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students. *Note:* At the international level, no universally accepted definition for "migrant" exists. The present definition was developed by IOM for its own purposes and it is not meant to imply or create any new legal category. (IOM)[10]

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[7] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Master Glossary of Terms (2006). See also international protection, migrant, refugee (mandate), refugee (1951 Convention).

[8] Adapted from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration,* Revision 1 (1998) p. 10, definition of "long-term migrants".

[9] https://www.unhcr.org/internally-displaced-people.html

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

Beneficiaries of International Protection* / Permission to Remain	A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (IOM)[11] **Subsidiary Protection** is complementary to refugee status. Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection cannot be returned to their country of origin or habitual residence because they face a real risk of serious harm. Serious harm means (i) the death penalty or execution; (ii) torture or inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment; (iii) serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict. (UNHCR - [Frequently asked questions - UNHCR Ireland](#)) **Permission to Remain** may be granted to persons deemed not to be entitled to refugee status or subsidiary protection. This is where the Minister considers whether to grant permission to remain in Ireland for another reason. The Minister will consider factors such as: a. the nature of a person's connection with Ireland, if any; b. humanitarian considerations; c. character and conduct both within Ireland and elsewhere, including any criminal convictions; d. considerations of the common good. (UNHCR - [Frequently asked questions - UNHCR Ireland](#)) ***Family Reunification** under the International Protection Act 2015 also gives certain family members an immigration permission allowing them to live in Ireland with the holder of an international protection declaration.

Adequate demographic planning will impact how the State allocates resources. As such, it will be necessary for migrants' place in Irish society to be included in this planning, and for migrants to have a voice in the decisions being made.

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[11] IOM. Adapted from Convention relating to the Status of Refugees ((adopted 28 July 1951, entered into force 22 April 1954) 189 UNTS 137) Art. 1A(2).
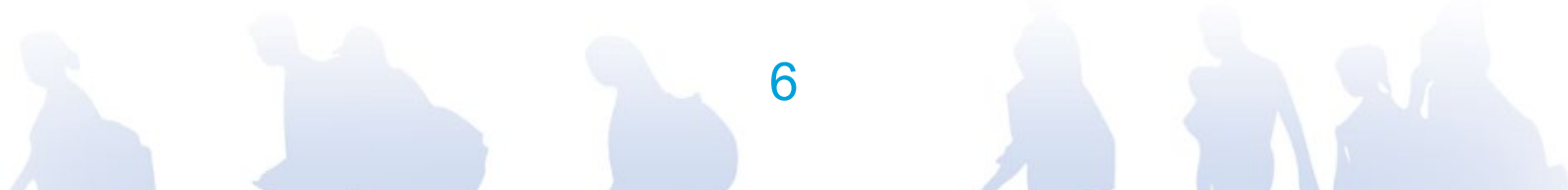
The Case Against 'Business As Usual'

The current Government knows that the existing dual crises of housing and health were not caused by the arrival of migrants from Ukraine, or any other country. Austerity policies introduced in the decade after 2008 saw a dramatic reduction in capital allocation to housing, particularly social housing[12], and Budget allocations to healthcare have failed to factor in existing levels of service and demographic change for years now[13]. Ireland is a wealthy country. However, this wealth-building is being prioritised over the well-being of the people who live here and the investment in the services we all need. The impact of these crises must also form part of future planning in the form of 'pent up demand', in addition to demographic change and increased immigration.

Our existing approach to international protection is not fit for purpose, and while Government has acknowledged this in the publication of the White Paper on Ending Direct Provision[14], progress towards the elimination of Direct Provision and developing a more integrated, human-rights-based approach has been lacking. As part of a multi-stakeholder conference entitled 'Beyond McMahon – Reflections on the Future of Asylum Reception in Ireland', Luke Hamilton of the Irish Refugee Council set out what a realistic not-for-profit model of reception would look like (Hamilton, 2018). Taking a rights-based approach, Hamilton's paper explored the "fundamental changes" required – from the physical space to the need to ensure personal wellbeing and development – and called for a move away from a for-profit model which maximises profit over conditions, to an integrated, not-for-profit model with Government working collaboratively with stakeholders within a clear set of national standards.

Our paper Migrations in Our Common Home: Responding with Care – Ireland's response to the Ukrainian crisis highlighted the disparity between the approach taken to migrants fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine and other applicants for international protection, and the existing pressures in areas such as housing and homelessness, healthcare inequalities, childcare, education and so on. A lack of investment in critical infrastructure and services has meant that increasing numbers of people were vying for the same inadequate resources. This is particularly the case in areas of socio-economic disadvantage where a sustained lack of investment has meant that services are insufficient to meet the needs of existing residents. Those same services have consequently found it difficult to cope with a significant increase in demand. Such increases risk undermining the initial positive response to the Ukrainian crisis across communities and creating a shift in attitudes to international protection more broadly. 'Business as usual' will not work.

The challenges faced by migrants in accessing adequate housing, healthcare, childcare and education are not restricted to those involuntary migrants who are fleeing persecution, violence or human rights abuses. International students and academic staff face increasing difficulty in finding housing when they arrive in Ireland, and economic migrants (many of whom arrive to take up high-paid jobs in IDA supported multinational corporations in the IT and pharmaceutical industries) likewise face choices based on limited public transport or other public services. Likewise, returning Irish emigrants, who may already have family and friends' networks in the country, still face challenges in accessing housing and other services in a similar manner to most people living in the country. We need a different approach.

That approach needs to take account of both the contributions that migrants make to society, as well as their needs based on the circumstances that prompted their arrival – those push and pull factors. These

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[12] Healy et al (2022): Socioeconomic Review: a 2022 guide to a fairer Irish society. Social Justice Ireland: Dublin, chapter 6.

[13] Social Justice Ireland (various years): Budget Analysis and Critique. Social Justice Ireland: Dublin.

[14] Government of Ireland (2021): White Paper on Ending Direct Provision. Stationery Press: Dublin.

contributions and needs must be part of the wider discussion, at national and local government levels, when it comes to resource allocation, development plans, the national Budget and so on. It would require a realistic assessment of the resources, and gaps, across the country to identify areas where space may be available, but supporting infrastructure such as accommodation, education, healthcare, and other amenities may be inadequate for an additional influx of people. This, in turn, would facilitate time-bound development plans to put this infrastructure in place for this and future generations.

While labour migration can positively contribute to the economic and social development of countries, it also comes as a consequence of the asymmetries in development between rich and poor countries, with workers struggling to find work elsewhere.

In the public services, skilled health and social care workers - often women- in many developing countries are forced to leave their families behind and work abroad to earn a decent income. They brave exploitation and discrimination, and their departure weakens health and social services in their home community.

Adequate planning for existing and future population needs would endeavour to ensure that existing communities have their needs met, and the additional resources required by an increase in the population of those communities has been considered. This would mitigate some of the fears we see in communities who are currently under-resourced yet identified by the Department of Children, Disability, Equality, Integration and Youth as having sufficient space to provide shelter to migrants. Fears providing factions who would spread anti-immigrant sentiment with a foothold of discontent (see Box 1).

As it stands, our 'Business as Usual' is not working to serve Ireland's society in an equitable, efficient or effective manner. We need to rethink what normal in Ireland should be. Taking a human-rights-based approach, everyone in society has a right to access appropriate accommodation; decent services and infrastructure; the right to participate in society and to maintain an adequate income; and the right to feel safe. These rights must be afforded to all people, however, and for whatever reason, they might have arrived here. How these rights are fulfilled will depend on the needs of the individuals and communities concerned, as well as available resources to do so.

A recent report by ODI examined public narratives and attitudes towards refugees and other migrants (Kumar, with Donoghue, 2023). In its Ireland country profile, Ireland fares quite well as having attitudes toward immigration that "are among the most positive in Europe" due in part to our own history of emigration and the fact that, so far, immigration has not been politicised (p.21). However, there is concern that some "masking" of anti-immigrant sentiment is occurring as well as evidence of persistent racism and discrimination against certain groups. Kumar and Donoghue also note the risk of a change in positive attitudes in light of the increasing cost of living and "unprecedented housing crisis". Without political intervention to address underlying crises, and political leadership on integration, it cannot be assumed that Ireland's positive attitude to migration will continue into the longer term.

Similarly, an article by Hosa and Valodskaitė (2023) identified the risk of what they termed "refugee fatigue" in respect of the Ukrainian crisis (but could have broader application to migrations generally). The authors of this article point to political leaders "overlooking" the need to maintain public support for Ukrainian migrants' access to labour, education and welfare supports under the Temporary Protection Directive and the risk that such a vacuum might be filled by mis- and dis-information about preferential treatment being given to migrants over citizens. The article urges political leaders to take control of the narrative to boost support for their migration policies, to share positive stories, and to find ways to fight disinformation (indeed OECD member countries are currently grasping this nettle with the recent passing of the Declaration on a Trusted, Sustainable, and Inclusive Digital Future[1] and supporting documentation). While these short-term measures are necessary as a response to the current risks, avoiding those risks will only be possible with a longer-term strategy and advance planning.

It is difficult to get an accurate picture of racism and discrimination in Ireland as there is a lack of consistency in how data are recorded. A Red C poll commissioned by the National Youth Council of Ireland and referenced in their submission on the National Action Plan Against Racism in 2021 indicated that 79 per cent of those aged 18-24 stated that racism is a significant issue online (compared with 69 per cent on average); 77 per cent of 18-24 year olds stated that Ireland needs a National Action Plan Against Racism (compared to 66 per cent on average); and 80 per cent of those aged 18-24 years old stated that racism had a negative impact on Irish society (compared to an average of 63 per cent) (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2021).

A report on Reports on Racism in Ireland 2022, published by the Irish Network Against Racism (INAR) found that there were 600 racist incidents reported in 2022, including 223 cases involving criminal offences, 190 involving discrimination, 136 incidences of hate speech, and 42 of other reportable racist incidents (INAR, 2023).

A more recent study on the experiences of second-generation ethnic minority young people in Ireland, published by DCU and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, raised issues of racism and discrimination, lack of representation, restricted social mobility, and "limited notions of Irishness" as barriers to meaningful integration, despite the "strong desire" for participants in the study to "truly belong to Irish society" (Machowska-Kosiack & Barry, 2022).

The ongoing crises in Ireland, such as those we are seeing in the healthcare system, housing affordability and availability, and the cost-of-living crisis all have the potential to be taken advantage of by anti-immigrant groups and those in the far-right to appeal to those in communities which have seen long-term systemic deprivation and have serious and valid concerns regarding resource allocation in their areas.

The increase of far-right/anti-migrant rhetoric in recent months, through online campaigns, attacks seen on homeless migrants, and weekly protests and demonstrations opposing the presence of migrants in some areas is cause for serious concern to members of the Roundtable. Government must undertake initiatives to counteract this harmful messaging and to facilitate integration of migrants. This is not only the right thing to do but is politically expedient as resistance to current international protection policies provide a platform, and voter base, for the far-right.

The Case for Forecasting

Without proper advance planning, inflows of migrants can lead to pressure on services, infrastructure, and the economy of a host country (Reuveny, 2007). The impact of increased migration to Ireland on public finances, public services, and public and charitable supports has brought into sharp relief the deficits in key policy areas such as housing, healthcare, income adequacy, public transport, childcare and so on. This impact requires careful consideration and demands that more careful planning and forecasting for future inward and outward migration is undertaken. That is not to say that Ireland should look to close our borders. Instead, we need to begin to view inward migration not only through our obligations under human rights protection and international law, but also as a positive, and begin to harness the skills and experiences of all migrants to support Irish society and economic activity, particularly at a time of almost full employment and emerging labour market shortages. These are the principles that should guide forecasting into the future.

Forecasting would not only provide an evidence-based estimate of the number of immigrants arriving, and overall net migration, but would facilitate proper planning of resources – including human capital. Introducing forecasting methodologies would also enable Ireland to move beyond the narrative of the number of migrants coming into or leaving the country and towards one that plans for the contributions of, and provision for, all people living here. For example, are there regional labour market differences which need to be considered? is there sufficient and appropriate accommodation or schools in place for the expected number returning Irish and migrants? and so on.

Forecasting models should include an in-depth analysis of various demographics, including gender and equality, which has been absent within the current model, and in line with the National Strategy for Women and Girls[15].

Forecasting Framework

It is essential that within this process, integration and human rights are kept as a central focus. Planning through forecasting for change must not be used to make entry to Ireland more difficult for migrants, but to ensure that their reception within the country is one that works for all. Forecasting for change should facilitate effective integration while empowering people to contribute to society where they can and provide refuge to those in need of it. It is time for Government to actively pursue equal treatment and integration of all migrants to Ireland, whether they are entering as highly skilled workers, as students, as family members, or as a result of conflict or persecution in other countries.

The Scottish Government introduced the requirement to utilise a human rights-based approach to all Government policy and law-making. The decision builds on the Scottish Human Rights Commission's explanation that:

> "A human rights-based approach is about empowering people to know and claim their rights and increasing the ability and accountability of individuals and institutions who are responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling rights.
>
> This means giving people greater opportunities to participate in shaping the decisions that impact on their human rights. It also means increasing the ability of those with responsibility for fulfilling rights to recognise and know how to respect those rights, and make sure they can be held to account.

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[15] Government of Ireland (2017): National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020: Creating a Better Society for All. Stationery Press: Dublin.

A human rights-based approach is about ensuring that both the standards and the principles of human rights are integrated into policymaking as well as the day-to-day running of organisations."

Scottish Human Rights Commission[16]

As part of this approach, the Scottish system provides for on-going consultation with both migrants and local communities to facilitate integration and support those seeking protection to contribute to their new communities[17]. There are some local examples of this happening in Ireland, primarily driven by local and community groups and networks, however this must be Government policy if it is to be adopted consistently.

In addressing displacement and forced migration, it is critical that Government Departments, State agencies, Local Authorities and others ensure a human rights first approach, particularly:

- Putting the active agency of people living in poverty first and building their awareness of rights. Women, men, youth, and children living in poverty can only claim and protect their rights when they organise themselves and mobilise as a constituency, aware of their rights, and conscious of why their rights are being violated.
- Community based solutions through building partnership of people, society, institution, and the ecology that we live in that promotes credible alternatives and sustainability taking future climate trajectory into account.
- An accountability mechanism that promotes transparency at all levels[18].

Forecasting to ensure that Ireland has adequate public services and infrastructure would also enhance our progress towards meeting our 2030 targets under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Ireland ranks 8th compared to our EU14 peers in Social Justice Ireland's Sustainable Progress Index, which suggested that there are pressing sustainability issues that must be addressed within the Goals of SDG7 'Affordable and clean energy', SDG12, 'Responsible consumption and production', and SDG13, 'Climate action'. While the low score on SDG2 'No hunger' emphasises the need to invest more in sustainable agriculture while Ireland's rank on SDG9, 'Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, points to the need for further policy action with regard to logistics and broadband capacities (Clark, Kavanagh, & Bennett, 2023).

Forecasting Methodologies

Forecasting for migration is not a new concept. In fact, in 2006 the then Government commissioned a study by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) on the social and economic impact of migration which recognised that migration increased economic growth, eased labour market shortages, improved output and reduced earnings inequalities (IOM and NESC, 2006). However, this report also acknowledged the challenges of migration in terms of the economic and social costs (including in the increased need for health and social care, education, and language services, and the experience of racism and discrimination by migrants). While the recommendations made in this report, such as the need for policies to foster integration and protect migrant rights, are still relevant today, it should be noted that the report was

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[16] https://eqhria.scottishhumanrights.com/eqhriaaddvalpolicy.html
[17] New Scots: refugee integration strategy 2018 to 2022 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
[18] This approach was first proposed by ActionAid in Tanjir Hossain, Anhara Rabbani, Maria Aktar, Md. Tariqul Hasan Rifat (2021) Addressing Climate Change Induced Displacement and Migration in Bangladesh: Taking a Human Rights Based Approach; ActionAid Bangladesh.

written over 16 years ago in the midst of the Celtic Tiger era and at a time when declining numbers of asylum seekers were entering the country.

More recently, in 2019, the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council (IFAC) developed a Working Paper on how Ireland might begin to predict migration (Arranz, 2019). The authors used a "gravity" model, which assumes that migration flows between two countries are positively correlated with the concentration of migrants already in place. Using this approach, the paper argued that we are more likely to see incoming migrants from areas from which we already have a high number of migrants. This is a useful tool, however it relies on existing migration flows, particularly those related to employment- or study-based immigration, and does not account for "shocks", such as wars or climate events. To predict migration flows due to these events, a different approach is required, one that considers that while shocks, by their nature, are unpredictable, it is possible to forecast increased potential for shocks by identifying and monitoring regional instabilities, be they political, economic, demographic or environmental, that pose increased risk of shocks. To this end, the use of machine learning, as indicated by a 2022 study, may be a viable option to highlight early signals of migration in order to provide more warning through forecasting of displacement in the short term (Carammia, Iacus, & Wilkin, 2022).

At a regional European level, the Migration Research Hub[19] has developed four scenarios to support the EU to better prepare for migration flows which take account of events such as climate change and conflict:

- Scenario 1: Unilateralism and economic convergence
- Scenario 2: Multilateralism and economic convergence
- Scenario 3: Unilateralism and economic divergence
- Scenario 4: Multilateralism and economic divergence

The factors it identifies as affecting European immigration in 2030 are 'the economic development gap' (that is, economic convergence v economic divergence), and the level of international cooperation between the EU and 'sending countries'[20] (multilateralism v unilateralism).

While there is some disagreement on which of the four scenarios will bear out, the authors of the study are of the view that Scenario 1, where EU countries grow more similar economically, but become engaged in less international cooperation (that is, become more unilateral) is more likely than the other three (with a 28.5 per cent chance), closely followed by Scenario 3 (less economically similar with less international cooperation at 27.5 per cent), while Scenarios 4 and 2 follow, with a 25 per cent and 19 per cent chance respectively are considered less likely. This work was developed into a paper by the authors, exploring the methods used in each scenario in greater detail (de Valk, et al., 2022). According to this paper, the realisation of Scenario 1 would see, comparative to 2009-2018, an increase in highly skilled migrants of 134 per cent, an increase of 21 per cent in total inflows and a decrease in asylum-seekers of 5 per cent by 2030. This Scenario, the authors suggest, would result in the smallest increase in annual international immigration to the EU-28 in 2030 from 2009-2018 levels of all Scenarios, at 21.1 per cent.

While further analysis is required to break this down to Member State level, and greater consideration of the impact of migration drivers such as increased climate breakdown, conflicts, persecution and so on, it is a useful starting point in thinking about more inclusive migration flows.

It is likely that a combination of approaches will be necessary to develop an effective and inclusive model of forecasting.

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[19] www.migrationresearch.com
[20] Future Migration Scenarios (migrationresearch.com)

Recommendations

Migration is not a new phenomenon. It is, however, increasing in scale as the impact of globalisation, climate change, wars, persecution and disasters increase. We need to ensure that we have adequate infrastructure and services to support all people living here to maintain a decent standard of living, now and into the future. We therefore make a series of recommendations to support this.

Promptly combat mis- and dis-information by engaging in a publicity campaign to highlight the positive aspects of migration and integration and challenging racism, explicit or implicit, when confronted with it.

Enforce existing **anti-discrimination** legislation and **expedite the passing of the Criminal Justice (Incitement to Violence or Hatred and Hate Offences) Bill 2022**, initiated in the Oireachtas in November 2022.

Convene a working group on Forecasting for Migration under the auspices of the Department of An Taoiseach with cross-sectoral membership, and Chaired by an independent, human rights expert and task that working group with developing a forecasting methodology within twelve months of first meeting.

Implement a Human Rights Based Approach for all Government policy, beginning with immigration policy, following the example of Scottish National Taskforce for Human Rights: leadership report (Scottish Government, 2021).

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