



## UWT Undocumented Worker Transitions

For Immediate Release

### Undocumented migrants face arduous path

Research across seven European countries has revealed that migrant workers are facing increasingly tight restrictions on their quality of life.

The research was publicised at a major conference on undocumented migrants held at London Metropolitan University. 100 participants from the UK and six other EU member states gathered for the event.

Leading experts on European migration attended and gave special sessions on shadow economies, legal status and labour market impacts. The project was co-ordinated by the Working Lives Research Institute which is based at London Met.

The project investigated:

- the reasons why migrants seek work in Europe without proper authorisation;
- their working conditions and experiences;
- the various ways in which legally working and residing migrants can fall into irregularity;
- the ways in which undocumented or irregular migrant workers may gain legal status; and
- the continued demand for irregular migrant labour, and its impact on labour markets.

The research concluded that in all seven countries there is a trend towards tightening the controls over family reunion, restricting economic migration through quota or special permits systems and containing 'illegality'. These are accompanied by restrictions on freedom of movement and on the right to work. In all seven countries the researchers observed a growing restrictive regime in relation to welfare rights and to social provision in relation to undocumented migrants, with increasing emphasis on the denial of basic rights, including healthcare rights.

At the same time the researchers find that these restrictive regimes have not halted undocumented migration. With testimonies taken from more than 200 workers who

are or who have been undocumented, and with interviews with national and European experts in migration, the researchers have concluded that the measures taken by the seven states have meant that workers without papers have been driven into the most marginal and dangerous jobs, but that the imperative for them to seek work makes even these difficult conditions 'acceptable'.

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### **Notes to Editors**

The research project is funded under the European Commission's Sixth Framework Programme and has been carried out by a partnership of seven research institutes.

UK: Working Lives Research Institute, London Metropolitan University

Austria: Forschungs- und Beratungsstelle Arbeitswelt

Belgium: Université Libre de Bruxelles, GEM- Institut de Sociologie

Bulgaria: International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations

Denmark: Roskilde University

Italy: University "Ca'Foscari" of Venice

Spain: Gabinet d'Estudis Socials

The project was co-ordinated by the Working Lives Research Institute. The Working Lives Research Institute is based at London Metropolitan University. The Institute, which was set up in 2002, carries out research into employment and has a recognised expertise in discrimination and disadvantage in relation to the UK's Black and minority ethnic communities and also on newer migrants and refugees.

### **For further project and conference information:**

[www.undocumentedmigrants.eu](http://www.undocumentedmigrants.eu).

The website also contains the papers produced in the course of the project.

**To arrange an interview or for further information please contact:**

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