

Documenting the lives of undocumented workers in Europe



The Working Lives Research Institute (WLRI) at London Metropolitan University is managing a European research project entitled Undocumented Worker Transitions (UWT), covering seven EU Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Italy, Spain and the UK. The UWT project, funded by the European Union's Sixth Framework programme, explores the factors underlying migration flows, focusing on undocumented migrant workers and their transitions between different countries, jobs and statuses.

Focusing specifically on undocumented or irregular migration, the project's objectives are:

- to deepen understanding of the impact of migration flows on EU labour markets;
- to theorise the relationship between the presence of 'informal' or 'shadow' industry labour markets and migration flows;
- to map and model migrant and refugee pathways into and within the EU;
- to deepen knowledge of how legal status interacts with migrant labour market positions;
- to deepen understanding of the impact of migration flows on countries of origin;
- to test key theories concerning human capital and social capital in relation to migration;
- to explore the particular consequences of migration for women workers and consider the gender impact of undocumented migration; and
- to give more reliable estimates of undocumented migration and refugee flows into the EU.

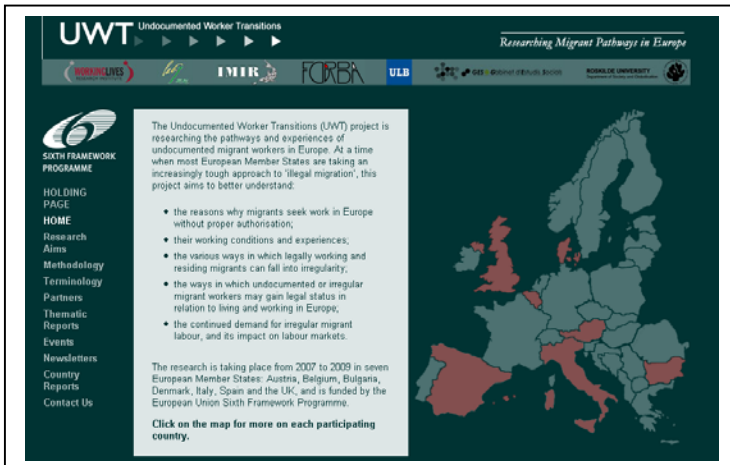
A further aim of the project is to challenge existing terminology in debates about undocumented migration, and a glossary will be produced of terms related to migration that considers the implications of the use of such terms for those defined by them and in wider society.

The UWT project started in March 2007 and will run for two years when a final conference will be held to present the major findings.

Below: UWT project researchers at a team meeting in Vienna May 2007



UWT project website launched



The Undocumented Worker Transition (UWT) project has launched its new website at www.undocumentedmigrants.eu. The site explains the aims of the research and shows the work of the project so far.

Country reports

Each country has prepared a report on the state of the art in relation to undocumented migration, summarising the national legislative and policy framework for migration; presenting available statistical data on migration; and reviewing existing country literature on migration, focusing on undocumented migrant workers. A 73-page overview report has also been prepared that summarises the situation in all seven countries and includes the European and international legal framework for migration. All these reports can be downloaded from the UWT website.

Introducing the partners

The UWT research project is being carried out by a partnership of research teams in seven European Member States, chosen for their knowledge of the fields of employment and migration.



UK - Working Lives Research Institute
Co-ordinator
www.workinglives.org

The Working Lives Research Institute (WLRI) is a centre for research and teaching, based at the London Metropolitan University. We undertake socially committed academic and applied research into all aspects of working lives, emphasising equality and social justice, and working for and in partnership with trade unions. We have wide experience of research in the area of migration, including the health and safety risk for migrant workers, the experiences of migrant workers in the hotel and catering

industry and studies of migrants in regional labour markets. WLRI has also extensive experience of European research, under both the Fifth and Sixth Framework programmes.

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Austria - Forschungs- und Beratungsstelle
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www.forba.at

FORBA is an independent research institute, established in 1991 as a not for profit organisation specialising in social science research in the area of working life. A special feature of the institute is its international orientation. Changes in working life are at the core of FORBA's research programmes. These cover both the macro level of trends in the labour market and the micro level of innovations in the workplace. Research at FORBA is organised around the following topics: "Sustainable Worlds of Work and Life", "Work, Gender and the Polity", "Work, Organisation, Transnationalisation", and "Technology Design and Data Protection".

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Belgium - Centre of Sociology of Work,
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www.ulb.ac.be/socio/tef

The Centre of Sociology of Work,
Employment and Training (TEF - Travail,
Emploi, Formation) is a research

department in the Université Libre de Bruxelles. It specialises in the study of labour organisation, the labour market and the development of sectors of activity, as well as in employment policies and the management of unemployment policies, often in co-operation with trade unions. TEF gives a central place to analysis of collective-agreements and management policies.

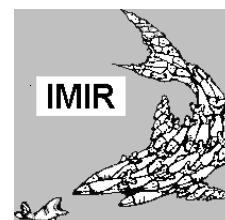
TEF-ULB has gained a good knowledge of administrative data, particularly concerning employment and unemployment. In addition, TEF has been, and still is, involved directly in the activities of several international research networks, for example: Labour market, ethnic minorities and citizenship; Transitions in youth (European Science Foundation); and Employment, Work, Industrial relations, collective bargaining.

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Bulgaria - International Centre for Minority
Studies and Intercultural Relations
www.imir-bg.org

IMIR is a non-political, non-profit and non-governmental organisation dedicated to the values of peaceful coexistence and tolerant interaction between different cultures, ethnicities and religions in Bulgaria, the Balkans and South Eastern

Europe. Nowadays IMIR is fully devoted to applied research, analyses, forecasts and policy recommendations working on issues like minority rights, migrations, human trafficking, Islam, and inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations. The Centre has always been active in stimulating inter-Balkan relations and regional co-operation, and has established a number of partnerships with academic and non-governmental organisations in other European countries.

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ROSKILDE UNIVERSITY
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Denmark - Roskilde University
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Roskilde University is a state university founded in 1972 with the objective of providing research and education at the highest level in the fields of natural science, social science and the humanities. Roskilde University's participation in the UWT project is mainly represented by the Department of Society and Globalisation, that carries out research and teaching in International Development Studies, Public Administration and Social Science. The institute plays a leading role in providing scientific research on undocumented work

and other integration and migration related issues.

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Italy - Laboratory of Research on
Immigration and Social Transformations
www.unive.it/masterim

Instituted in 1997, the Laboratory of Research on Immigration and Social Transformations of Ca' Foscari University in Venice performs systematic analysis of the migration phenomenon, with particular reference to: the work and the health of immigrants, racism and discrimination, the condition of immigrant women, the processes of social inclusion and exclusion, juridical regulations and practices, migration policies, housing conditions, the situation of pupils and of the young, forms of association and immigrant participation in trade-union life and policy, intercultural dynamics, artistic expressions, and social pathologies. Beginning in 1997-1998 with a two-year course on immigration for groups of students of the University Diploma in Social Services consisting of three cycles of seminars, the Immigration Laboratory then took as its principal objectives: social research, documentation through the

systematic acquisition of the most important scientific literature, support to students of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy preparing theses on themes related to migration phenomena, and training for social organizations and operators from various spheres of activity.

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GES  **Gabinet d'Estudis Socials**

Spain - Gabinet d'Estudis Socials

www.gabinet.com

The Gabinet d'Estudis Socials (GES) is a co-operative with full legal power to operate at national and European levels. GES was founded in 1983 and has no dependency on any other public or private institutions. GES focuses its activity in the fields of policy and social services with a significant interest in migration, poverty, exclusion and the labour market. GES also devotes special attention to the social economy. GES undertakes work in the fields of research, evaluation, training, promotion and encouragement of certain programmes and projects, information and publications. For this reason, GES has a documental and computer-based system which is being regularly updated.

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Methodology

The UWT project is using both quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve its aims, in addition to analysing existing research material.

Stakeholder interviews

Around 70 experts, stakeholders, social partners and migrant and refugee community organisations are being interviewed to provide an overview of migration trends, policies and their impacts (7-9 in each country plus European and international level experts).

Migrant worker interviews

A total of 210 in-depth interviews are to be held with migrant workers who are currently, or who have been, undocumented (30 in each country). These will include both women and men; workers in a range of sectors, including hospitality, construction and domestic work; and those who have been subjected to forced labour or trafficking.

Methodology workshop

In May 2007 the project held a 3-day methodology workshop in Vienna, hosted by our Austrian partner FORBA, where we decided key aspects of our methodology in relation to the glossary of terms on undocumented migration, the stakeholder and expert interviews, the migrant worker interviews and producing estimates of undocumented migration in each partner country.

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