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## **Fewer irregular residents in Europe than assumed. New online information on irregular migration**

There are fewer irregular migrants in the European Union (EU) than assumed. While the European Commission has estimated that between 4.5 and 8 million foreign nationals are residing in its territory without a right to legal residence, a detailed review of the situation in the member states has led CLANDESTINO researchers to estimate that the range is more likely between 2.8 and 6 million. Both figures were calculated for the year 2005. Flow trends indicate that irregular residence has since declined further. However, it is important to distinguish between irregular residence and irregular work. Irregular work engaged in by regular residents became more relevant with the growth of the European Union and the rise in the number of EU citizens with the right to travel but not to work.

The estimate of 2.8 to 6 million is part of a new database on irregular migration produced by five European research centres and a European non-governmental organization which form the CLANDESTINO project consortium, funded by DG Research of the European Commission for the period from 2007 to 2009. In order to increase transparency in a sensitive field, the CLANDESTINO project has just made extensive information available online. The new database on irregular migration includes a set of interactive tables with data and estimates on undocumented migration in Europe. With the help of national experts from other EU countries, the CLANDESTINO research team has created a classification scheme for estimates on irregular migration. The classification scheme indicates to users whether the given estimate is provided by a reliable source using a robust methodology, or whether it is more of a “guesstimate.”

The database is supported by a set of country reports that provide a more comprehensive picture of irregular migration in Europe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These country reports were authored by national experts based in the countries studied (notably Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, and the UK). The reports contain discussions not only of numbers, but also of policies and patterns of irregular migrant flows and stocks in the countries concerned. Morocco, Turkey and Ukraine were also studied, in order to highlight migration challenges in countries that experience ‘transit’ migration to the EU. The main results and policy recommendations for individual countries are also available in the form of research briefs, which appear both in English and in the national language of the country concerned.

For more information, visit <http://clandestino.eliamep.gr> (country reports and research briefs), and <http://irregular-migration.hwwi.net> (database).

