Overview
Looking at the recent European immigration scene, the over-riding impression is of relatively incoherent and contrary trends in different countries, the volatility of immigration policy and of immigration itself. That inconstancy of trends is superimposed upon a generally rising level of immigration over the last couple of decades to the EU countries, to levels in net terms (up to 2 million in a year) considerably higher than the inflow to the United States (Figure 1). Since 2008 that has been followed by an almost universal decline in response to the economic crisis. We are only slowly and with much uncertainty recovering from that crisis. We await data to show the full impact of that crisis upon migration flows, or whether they have yet begun to reverse as some have forecast. Migration novelties of the last decade include the increased emigration of citizens from the UK, Netherlands, Germany, and the very large increase, and more recent partial ebb, of migration from the new Eastern European Accession countries (A8) to the EU to those few countries that did not initially impose restrictions on labour movement after their accession (UK, Sweden, Ireland). The data that follow are based mostly on registration statistics not on actual counts of inflow and outflow. Many should be accompanied by health warnings, for which there is no space to insert.

Figure 1

This short overview will outline the basic trends, try to tease out the relative importance of the very different streams that comprise the totality of immigration,
and try to evaluate what role policy has had, and can have in the future. A few speculations will be advanced as to what the future may hold.

Looking at the recent trends in overall net migration of a number of European counties, it can be seen that this overall tendency until recently for migration to increase masks a number of strongly divergent trends (Figure 2). The UK shows a marked increase to become the largest recipient of immigration in the EU, displacing Germany from its previous top position, held for decades. As recently at 1993, net immigration to the UK was negative. By contrast Germany and France have experienced smaller and generally diminishing flows, that to Germany being briefly negative, as was that to the Netherlands (these are all net data). Flows in each direction, e.g. to Germany, remain very large, 600,000 approximately. And the flows that are relatively small in absolute numbers, e.g. to Denmark and especially to Switzerland, are large in relation to their small national populations. In those examples, as in Sweden and some others not shown, net immigration has recently increased.

Figure 2

For two European counties, it is necessary to graph migration on a different scale. Spain and Italy, traditional emigration countries until the 1980s, had relatively modest published immigration figures until recently. The growing scale of illegal or unrecorded immigration, however, changed all that, especially in Spain. When amnesties regularised much of the illegally resident population, and the scale of inflows was incorporated into statistics, the picture changed radically (Figure 3). The beginning of the downturn provoked by the crisis is just starting to be evident in Figure 3. More recent data not shown in the graph estimate net migration to Spain falling to 2 per 1000 in 2009, compared with 15 per thousand in the previous five years. Migration to Ireland, 12 per 1000 up to 2007, has now reversed. Overall net migration to the EU is expected to halve in 2009 to 1.9 / 1000, compared with the previous five years (Sobotka 2010).
Flows for work and other purposes
It is very difficult to make Europe-wide comparisons of the relative strength of inflows for different purposes, except asylum, because the measurement of (e.g.) labour migration is seldom made through the same process as that for overall migration on UN criteria. The weak sample data from the UK International Passenger Survey are a partial exception. However in general, since the 1970s most (regular) migration has not been specifically for purposes of work but more for family reunion, family formation, as other dependants, students and asylum seeking. In most of the guest-worker countries, labour migration was severely restricted following the oil shock of 1973. By that time the traditional industries for which the mostly low-skill labour had been recruited were in any case either in terminal decline or were remaining profitable by replacing routine labour with capital, with highly automated processes. Since then, most migration has not been formally economic in origin. Labour migration has continued on a smaller scale, mostly under the restrictions of work permits from non-EU countries. It concentrates on skills: in the last decade or two European countries have begun to compete for highly skilled immigrants (Lowell 2005) and develop selective programmes to attract them (documented in McLaughlan and Salt 2002). The spouses, dependants, students, asylum seekers and the rest may work and do, of course, but their labour force participation can be low, a handicap that can extend into the second generation (OECD 2007 pp 62 – 95). Depending on national rules, students may stay to work, and in some countries graduates are now encouraged to do so. To take two extreme examples from OECD data (2006), in 2001 the proportion of non-EU immigrants to Sweden entering as labour migrants was 3% (gross inflow) and to Denmark in 2005 1.6% (net inflow). By contrast, labour migration to Germany has been substantial especially since re-unification; 380,000 entered for work in 2004 out of a total gross inflow of 602,000 foreign citizens (63%). But net inflow is declining.

Family migrants and dependants, mostly from outside Europe, are more likely to remain than are labour migrants (Rendall and Ball 2004). The self-perpetuating
networks promoting chain migration from poor countries have created substantial and growing transnational populations through the process described as ‘cumulative causation’ by Massey and Zenteno (1999). Most of that was neither inevitable nor planned; it followed on from a labour migration assumed to be temporary through the development, for humanitarian reasons, of systems of rights for family migration and other immigrant entitlements, in conjunction with the other post-war ‘revolutions’ of information and communication (Freeman 1994, Martin et al. 2005 p.222).

Until 2004 recent flows within the EU have usually been relatively numerically balanced. The removal of internal barriers to movement has not ironed out persistent regional disparities in labour shortage and surplus (Rees and Kupiszewski 1999). Long-standing cultural differences even between the different regions of European countries still strongly affect internal migration patterns, for example in Germany (Falck et al. 2010). The massive recent inflow of young people from Eastern Europe to the UK, Ireland and Sweden following the accession of Central and Eastern European counties to the EU (A8 countries) is a recent major exception to that generalisation. A cumulative total of 989,085 applications under the Workers’ Registration Scheme had been made to the UK up to March 2009 (UK Border Agency 2009, table 1) – a gross inflow figure. The economic and other criteria for entry of the A8 countries to the EU were set relatively lower than those imposed on the southern European countries in the 1980s. The UK government chose not to adopt the delay on free movement of labour after A8 accession imposed by the other major EU economies, claiming that the annual inflow to the UK would be of the order of 13,000. However, even before the economic crisis, the Polish and UK economies were moving in opposite directions; inflow was slowing (but is still positive), and return migration was accelerating. Inflows of dependents may follow, however.

Labour migration has continued, and recently has increased to some counties. But it focused on high-skill occupations in shortage, often mediated through intra-company transfers. Immigration of students from outside Europe has increased rapidly, and asylum grew to very high levels, partly in response to political crisis in the Balkans and Middle East, before returning to rather lower levels in the last few year. The example of France from 1963 illustrates the transition from labour to family migration typical of many countries (Figure 4).

Table 1 below shows the pattern for France in 2005 in more detail. As in most other European countries with the partial exception of the UK, the greater part of migration from other developed countries is for labour (and retirement); that from the third world is mostly of family, spouses, dependants, students and asylum.

Table 1. France 2005. Immigration (gross inflow) by group of nationalities according to reason for admission (percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group of countries</th>
<th>All EEA</th>
<th>Turkey, Switzerland</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Americas</th>
<th>Other countries</th>
<th>Total Non-Europe</th>
<th>Grand total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All EEA</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family of foreigner</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family of French</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number</td>
<td>42876</td>
<td>24404</td>
<td>95309</td>
<td>29274</td>
<td>14941</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>164685</td>
<td>207561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% from each group of countries</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: INED statistiques sur la flux d'immigration.
http://statistiques_flux_immigration.site.ined.fr/fr/admissions/

Looking at the EU-27 as a whole, in 2006 14% of all immigrants were citizens of the country of destination, 34% were from other EU states – predominantly from Poland and Romania - and 52% were from outside the EU. The last were relatively evenly distributed from the world’s major geographical regions (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Foreign immigrants to the EU according to geographical region of citizenship. Source: Eurostat 2008, Figure 4.

The largest number from any individual country was from Morocco, followed by Ukraine, China, India and Bolivia (Eurostat 2008, p. 3). All these numbers refer to gross, not net, immigration.
What can be said about the future of migration?

Migration data is problematic and inadequate, although improving (e.g. Spanish 2007 Immigrant Survey; EU Mimosa, Raymer 2008, US Bureau of the Census 2005.). Migration theory remains fragmentary and cannot easily forecast the likely future trends of aggregate migration flows (Howe et al. 2005, Eurostat 2007). Many of the events driving it are unpredictable. Comprising numerous unrelated flows from many origins for unconnected purposes, migration has defied satisfactory modelling or projection except where it is dominated by regular labour migration. Political processes at home and abroad can be paramount. For population projection, most national statistics offices assume the continuation of the current level or the extrapolation of recent trends. Critics of such a simple approach are usually baffled to suggest anything better. Economic models succeed best when migration is primarily for labour. Usually it is not. The buoyant Norwegian economy provides an exception. The econometric model of Brunborg and Capellen (2009) fits past trends well and, for example, predicts a strong downturn in immigration to Norway as its economic attractions are expected to fade as its oil runs out.

Generally, migration pressure to developed countries from the South is likely to remain high, and possibly increase for some time, before declining. Economic and demographic disparities between North and South continue and in some cases have widened. Whether moving specifically for work or for a ‘better life’ in general, residents of poor countries are usually materially better off somewhere else. On the demand side, employers demand easy access to labour, especially if earlier migrant flows have made them dependent upon it, and if population ageing or labour market protection restricts domestic supply as in many parts of Europe. Many third-world countries remain politically unstable. The ‘cumulative causation’ of established immigrant populations provokes further immigration through networks and chain migration (Gurak et al. 1992, Mitchell and Pain 2003, Massey and Zenteno 1999). Commitment to human rights, family re-union and asylum conventions, and growing ethnic electorates, make it difficult for Western states with liberal pretensions to restrict immigration effectively (Freeman 1994, Castles 2007). In Europe, the EU Commission, supported by the UK government among others has stated that it wishes to expand EU membership to countries on the edge of Europe and beyond: to Ukraine, (population 50 million), to Turkey (population 76 million), and even to North Africa, countries with larger populations and even lower levels of development than those recently admitted. That would guarantee migration pressure well into the future (Rowthorn 2009). Rising economic inequality within countries such as the UK may also encourage immigration (Hatton 2005).

Most commentators have concluded that the economic downturn will have only transient effects on inflow. ‘A8’ apart, because most immigrants are not labour migrants. Marriage migration and the inflow of dependants, students, asylum seekers and others will be little affected (Dobson et al. 2009; Beets et al. in press; OECD 2009a pp. 63 – 65.). Nonetheless, provisional data so far show that its effects have been substantial in some countries.

Emigration of citizens has also increased from a number of Western European countries including the UK (Evans et al 2007) and Germany; (Sauer et al. 2007) and even France. In the Netherlands the recent outflow is attributed to dissatisfaction with
domestic conditions, crowding and social and environmental deterioration (van Dalen and Henkens 2007). Strong UK population growth may provoke further outflow from the UK for similar reasons, along with the gloomy outlook for the UK economy. On the other hand retirement emigration may slow while the adverse exchange rate with the euro persists.

Even before the economic crisis, migration from the A8 countries was slowing and return migration increasing. As economies of East European source countries grew, stimulated by the opportunities of EU membership, the value of the Zloty and other Eastern currencies has risen, and so diminished the exchange-rate advantage of working in the West. Furthermore, rapid domestic growth together with labour shortages exacerbated by the emigration has promoted domestic labour demand and wage-rates. In 2011 all EU countries must open their doors to the new accession countries for entry for work, which should further diminish the relative advantages of movement to UK, Sweden and Ireland.

Many skilled labour migrants come from India to developed countries, notably to work in the IT sector. Crisis apart, that and similar flows have been increasing (Salt 2009 t.5.6, 5.4). But in the long run labour migration from India may well decline, if the continued rapid growth of the Indian economy absorb more of its own specialists. That applies a fortiori to China, with its even more rapid growth. Basing themselves primarily on labour market considerations, some analysts (e.g. Barrell et al. 2009) using the model of Mitchell and Pain (2003), project that the narrowing of narrowing of the economic gap would reduce substantially net migration to the UK from the A8, the Old Commonwealth countries, India, Latin America, halving the currently officially projected increase in migrant stock by 2030 (p37, Figure 6). But that scenario may take insufficient account of non-economic migration.

Students are a major component of migration flows to Europe and the US from the third world, and many stay to take jobs. Flows are increasing fast. China dominates these flows, with 350,000 students studying abroad in 2007, projected to be 645,000 in 20 years. China has a huge programme to increase the quality and volume of its domestic higher education – numbers are growing at 25% per year between 1999 and 2004. But even that does not appear to compensate for the growing demand for higher education. Chinese students overseas are projected to increase to 645,000 by about 2025. Eventually the growing domestic sector and the demographic diminution of the numbers of young people must reduce overseas migration, but the must be at least a couple of decades away. In the meantime other countries are sending more students abroad: from India 130,000 in 2005, projected to increase to 300,000, followed by South Korea (127,000) Morocco (106,000) and Turkey (104,000) (IDP Australia 2007).

Arranged marriage - preferably first-cousin or uncle-niece in Pakistan – is favoured in many traditional societies and is a growing component of migration to many European countries, displacing old-style family reunion with new family formation, some of it motivated more by the prospect of migration than the pleasures of marriage. In the UK, marriage migration from the Indian sub-Continent has been growing roughly pro rata with the growth of the young South Asian population in the UK. In the Netherlands it had become the most important component of all migration from North Africa and Turkey. Marriage migration comes from many parts of the
traditional world; for example numbers from sub-Saharan Africa to the UK trebled from 1996 to 2006.

Otherwise, and medical personnel apart, immigrants from the least developed third world, especially Africa, are mostly asylum seekers, students and dependants and illegal entrants. Chronic political instability, rapid population growth and economic and environmental fragility are likely to keep inflows high for the foreseeable future. It may increase substantially if global climate change has early effects. That may over-ride the outcomes of any scenario based only on socio-economic and political considerations. Its widely forecast effects have now crept within the time-horizon of population projections. If those forecasts prove to be correct, there could be major implications for international migration although to estimate the effect would be to pile one uncertainty on another.

Effects of policy
Part of the volatile track of migration trends can be put at the door of policy changes in sending and receiving counties. The most important political changes in sending countries are those that provoke, or ease, asylum seeking, either as a result of persecution of specific minorities promoted by governments or not controlled by them (e.g. Kurds in Turkey, Christians in Palestine and Iraq) or economic mismanagement or both (e.g. Zimbabwe). The regime change in Iraq, which might have been expected to reduce the flow of refugees from the previous regime, has instead provoked the flight of well over a million people to neighbouring Syria.

In the receiving countries, successive governments differ in their perception of migration. New policies on immigration are often brought in by governments elected primarily on quite other reasons. In other cases, immigration itself is a factor in the change of government, usually to control it further. For well-known reasons it is easier in liberal democracies to encourage immigration than to restrict it. For example, the incoming Labour government in the UK reversed the previous (relatively ineffective) restrictive policy of the previous 30 years, promoting immigration for a variety of reasons mostly connected with expansion of labour supply and growth of GDP. Figure 2 showed that by mid 2000s this trebled net immigration compared with the early 1990s, taking net inflows to by far the highest level in the EU except for Spain and Italy. The radical and much more spectacular increases in net inflows to those two countries (making their combined inflow greater than that to the US) have arisen partly because of political change, especially the return of a Socialist government in Spain favourable to migration. Amnesties regularised large numbers of illegal immigrants.

Policy changes in Sweden and Denmark to favour skilled labour migration have also increased overall net flows to those countries, and in Sweden immigration is projected to increase to mid-century (Figure 6). Contrary trends are apparent in some of the major countries of Western Europe, responding in part to a public opinion (which seldom favours immigration) turning sharply against it in recent opinion polls. Thus in the UK, the Labour government, alarmed by the negative response among many of its own voters to the expansion of immigration, has announced a series of measures designed to limit some immigration
The high immigration in year 2006 is due to a temporary change in the asylum law effective from November 2005 to March 2006. *Source: SCB Statistics Sweden*

streams, while continuing to encourage skilled labour migration. At the time of writing, its effects are difficult to disentangle from the inevitable reduction following the economic downturn. A reluctance to accept further immigration was indicated when all the major countries of the EU except the UK exercised their right to exclude general labour migration from the new Central and Eastern /European EU members on their accession in May 2004 (selective labour migration had already been in progress for some time). That exclusion must expire by 2011. Some, e.g. Italy, have already relaxed that restriction but Germany has not. Over most of the post-war period, Germany received about two thirds of immigrants to Europe and two thirds of asylum seekers. But a variety of measures beginning with a reform of the Fundamental Law in 1991 to limit asylum seeking, and later the inflow of *aussiedler*, together with less impressive economic growth, have greatly reduced net immigration. Immigration can go down as well as up (Figure 7).
In France, labour migration had been selective and restricted for some time (Figure 3). But by 2003, immigration for all purposes had doubled from 50,000 in 1998 to 102,000. Further policy to restrict immigration has accelerated since: the reform of 30 April 2003 extended the time required to naturalise, created a digital database of fingerprints, imposed more strict conditions on asylum, on marriage migration and other measures. In 2005 steps to reduce illegal immigration were part of a policy of ‘immigration choisie plutôt que subie’. The law of 14 November 2006 adopted stronger measures to restrict "mariages de complaisance" entered into solely to facilitate immigration. Further tightening followed after M. Sarkozy (then Interior Minister) was elected President in May 2007, alongside a new policy on ‘national identity’. Migration to France has diminished and is now much lower than to the UK (Figure 3).

Some policies aim to restrict some immigration streams (notably those not focused on economic contributions) while leaving or even promoting others. Thus in Denmark, legislation since 2002 has severely tightened the requirements for marriage migration, reducing that flow to one-third of their previous level (Figure 8).

Figure 8

More recently, Danish policy has been to admit more skilled workers under various permits, so the total volume of immigration is now higher than ten years ago, although its composition is considerably different. The sharp reduction in marriage migration (especially in respect of the second generation) among Moroccans and Turks in the Netherlands following a policy change in 2004 was noted earlier. As a consequence, a much higher proportion of Turks residing in the Netherlands are now marrying (Turkish) spouses who are also living in the Netherlands, not introduced from abroad (Figure 9).
Effects on population

The effects on the population of European countries are substantial, but diverse. As might be imagined, the prosperous countries of Western Europe (in the broad sense) have been attractive to immigrants, including to immigrants from the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The latter for the most part have lost population by emigration to the West, although in some cases that is compensated or more than compensated by new migration from the West (e.g. in the Czech Republic) and from further East (Ukraine) and the global South; in transit to Western Europe but in many cases remaining. The collapse of the birth rate in those countries at the end of communism, contemporaneous with the substantial exodus, is apparent in Figure 10. The Russian Federation is an exception. After the fall of communism it became substantial country of immigration, initially of Russian nationals departing newly-independent former Soviet states (the ‘near abroad’), more recently a larger number of the nationals of those states. Net immigration in 2006 was 132,319 and in 2009, estimated at 240,000, was reported to have just balanced the natural decrease of -1.8 per 1000, generating a small increase in population for the first time since the mid-1990s.
In western Europe, a number of countries with moderately high fertility still have positive natural increase thanks to demographic momentum, assisted by the higher birth rates seen almost everywhere in recent years (some Scandinavian countries, France, UK). With current migration, they are projected to increase by up to 20% by mid-century. Others (Spain, Italy) would decline substantially without their current high immigration, and Germany is already declining in numbers, with a modest net immigration in 2007 of 44,000.

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**Figure 10**


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**Figure 11**

Source: Eurostat 2010

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Formerly relatively modest in comparison with the number of births and with natural increase, and sometimes negative, net immigration now exceeds natural increase in most European countries and in even approaches or (Spain) exceeds the total number of live births each year (Table 3). If these trends continue, populations of immigrant origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population 1st Jan 08</th>
<th>Live births</th>
<th>Natural increase</th>
<th>Net immigration</th>
<th>Immigration as percent of births</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>44475</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>7509</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>59131</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>88</td>
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<td>69</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>82315</td>
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<td>-141</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>Euro total</td>
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<td>483</td>
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<td>4217</td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Note: US data refer to 2006, Australia, Canada and New Zealand to 2007. Net immigration data not available for US. Admission for permanent settlement in 2006 was 1,266,264. Figure reduced by 1/3 to 844,000 to allow for return migration.

will reach relatively high proportions of the national population in a few decades, in some cases to quite similar proportions to that projected in the US, if US non-immigrant minorities are excluded. Projections by national origin have been made for several European countries to mid-century. Most assume that immigration will continue at approximately recent levels and that fertility differentials will diminish or disappear (Figure r). On those assumptions, populations of foreign origin (mostly defined through registers as first and second generation) would rise to between 15%
and 35% of the populations of some European countries by mid-century. Of those, about one-third are projected to be people of other European origins, two thirds from outside Europe (Figure 12).

Figure 12.

Policy development

Only the EU Commission and the Council of Europe claim to speak for all (or most) of Europe in respect of what its policy should be, the one from supposed economic interest (2005), the other from the moral high ground (2001). The demographic and labour market and economic scenes in European counties are too diverse for any single immigration policy to be appropriate. Despite the ambitions of the European Commission. Common asylum policy is an obvious exception. Furthermore, as in most policy areas, political considerations will overcome supposedly scientific research-based prescriptions, and immigration policy can change abruptly as a result of the fall of the electoral dice. In some of the countries mentioned above, the labour force is not projected to decline for some time and labour migration is concentrated upon filling highly skilled shortages. At the moment demand and supply are both inevitably low.

Elsewhere, very low birth rates, if continued, seem likely to provoke insuperable future labour shortages which only immigration can resolve even if fertility does recover. In addition, many of the shortages of labour of which some employers, governments and analysts complain follow from excessively tight labour market policies and generous retirement and welfare arrangements in countries that follow the ‘European social model’, notably those in Southern Europe. These are the same populations, with their tradition of ‘familist’ culture, that also suffer the lowest birth rates and the most rapid population ageing. The unsustainability of their labour market, retirement and pension arrangements have been cruelly highlighted by the current economic crisis, and the demonstrations in Greece in recent weeks are a potent reminder of the strong opposition inevitably encountered when generous vested
interests are challenged. Given such protection, illegal or irregular immigration is attractive to employers as such immigrants are often willing workers prepared to take modest wages and conditions. Some ingenious but extreme solutions have been propose for countries such as Italy, to make a virtue out of their predicament (Figure 13). Such schemes might well help to keep Italy prosperous, but possibly for fewer and fewer Italians.

Figure 13. Source: G Dalla Zuanna and F Michielin 2003
References


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