

Background to Migration

Migration is the movement of people either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, uprooted people and economic migrants. (Source: International Organisation for Migration) Migration has been part of human history since the beginning of humankind. In all periods, people have left their homelands for a variety of reasons. Many migrants who arrive in Ireland do so after difficult journeys from their countries of origin. Some have fled hunger, war and persecution; some have been driven away by environmental changes or trafficked against their will. Others migrate, either temporarily or permanently, in search of greater opportunities or to widen their horizons. Those who migrate are generally not a homogeneous group. Generally speaking, a **migrant can be defined as a person who has left his/her country of residence and has moved to another country to take up temporary or permanent residence in that country.**

Migrant worker

is a person admitted to a country for the specific purposes of exercising an economic activity which is remunerated from within that country. The length of stay is usually restricted as is the type of employment that s/he can hold.

A person seeking asylum (refugee)

is someone fleeing persecution in his/her own country who has applied to the State to be recognised as a refugee. While in the asylum system a person has limited rights and is not allowed take up employment.

A Refugee

is a person whose application for asylum has been successful. A refugee has largely the same rights as a citizen.

A person with leave to remain/subsidiary protection,

although having fewer rights than a refugee, is allowed to live and work in the State.

An undocumented migrant

is a person who is not able to validate their residence or work in a country in accordance with the legal rules, including refused asylum seekers and visa overstayers.

(Sanctuary: Migrant and Refugee Project

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Irish Migration Statistics

□ **Worldwide** there are some **43 million forcibly displaced persons** whom over **15 million are refugees**, almost **1 million are seeking asylum** and **27 million are people displaced within borders** of their own country. In addition it is estimated that some **12 million people are stateless.** (*UNHCR statistics*)

□ The 2006 census records the **number of non Irish nationals** in the republic (from within and without the EU/EEA) at around **420,000**, representing almost 10% of the total population. Of this 10%, over 7% come from Europe, 1.1% from Asia, 0.9% from Africa and 0.5% from America. (*CSO statistics*)

□ The number of **Non Irish Nationals** working in Ireland at the start of 2011 was **202,900** representing a decrease of 34,500 or 14.5%. (*CSO statistics*)

□ Of the **39,000 people** who came to **Ireland** in the year up to April 2009, over **70% were from other EU countries and the United States of America**. (*CSO Statistics*)

□ Of the 65,300 people who **emigrated** in the year to April 2010, **Irish nationals** were the largest group accounting for **27,700** or 42 per cent. (*CSO Statistics*)

□ It is estimated that there are some **50,000 irregular/undocumented Irish migrants in the United States of America.** (*CSO Statistics*)

□ In 2010, Ireland has recognised **10,347 people as refugees**. In 2009, just under **2,700 people came to Ireland seeking asylum**, less than 0.5% of those who sought asylum worldwide. In the same year the highest number of asylum applications was made in South Africa (25%), followed by the US (5%) and France 9\$%). (UNHCR statistics)

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About the Irish Episcopal Council for Immigrants

Immigration both voluntary and involuntary is a global phenomenon, touching every Irish parish today. Concern for the reception and treatment of immigrants and on the related question of pastoral care prompted the formation of the Irish Episcopal Council for Immigrants in September 2008. Its mission is to welcome, support and empower immigrants who live in Ireland. The Council serves as the centre of a network of diocesan and parish personnel who minister various ethnic groups and people on the move throughout the country. It is tasked with increasing pastoral awareness, cultural sensitivity, and the dynamics of outreach, welcome and support throughout its network. Inherent in its mission is the promotion and development of mutual respect and incorporation of the gifts and talents offered by diverse cultures into our parish lives. To fulfil this mission, the Council aims to develop and foster initiatives between the Bishops' Conference and the dioceses and parishes in relation to the pastoral care of immigrants.

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