



International Centre  
for Migration Policy Development

**Estimates on the Numbers of  
Illegal and Smuggled Immigrants  
in Europe**

**Presentation at Workshop 1.6  
8<sup>th</sup> International Metropolis Conference**

**Michael Jandl, 17.9.2003**



## **Illegal Migration as a subject of research?**

### **Illegal (undocumented) Migration**

- is statistically not directly quantifiable (by its very nature)
- is therefore scientifically neglected and dismissed
  
- has high social and political relevance
- is highly present in the media, often based on shaky numbers
  
- Even if no strictly „scientific“ evidence is available:
  - indications on methods, assumptions and sources of quantitative estimates should be given
  - so that a careful interpretation of data can produce qualified statements on the dimensions, trends and quality of illegal migration.



## Illegal Migration: Definitions and Types

### Differentiation:

- stock data (illegal residence, illegal work)
- flow data (illegal entry)

### 6 relevant types:

	Residence legal	Residence illegal
Entry legal	Work illegal	Work illegal No Work
Entry illegal	Work illegal	Work illegal No Work



## **Methods I: “Residual” estimates**

**Based on the differences between**

- **Census results  
and**
- **Aliens registers, municipal registers, etc.**
  
- **Example USA:**
  - **The INS estimates some 8.5 million illegal residents on the basis of the Census 2000**
  
- **Example Spain:**
  - **The Census 2001 counted 1.57 million foreigners as against 1.11 million foreigners with valid residence permits (INE)**



## **Methods II: “Multiplier” estimates**

Based on the projection of available indicators, using an appropriately defined multiplier, on:

- **Flow data (illegal immigration)**

**Example: apprehension data of illegal migrants at the border**

- **Stock data (illegal residence, illegal work)**

**Example 1: apprehension data of illegal migrants within the country**

**Example 2: data on illegal employment of foreigners from labour inspectorates**

**Variant: „Capture-Recapture“ Method**



## **Methods III: “Demographic” estimates**

**Based on the observation that illegal (undocumented) migrants leave traces in official demographic statistics, it is (theoretically) possible to make projections on the size of the uncounted population**

- **Examples**
  - **Birth rates by nationalities**
  - **Death rates by nationalities**
  - **Hospitalization rates by nationalities**
  - **other**



## **Methods IV: “indirect” estimates**

**Indirect estimation techniques involve the estimation of uncounted quantities through their postulated correlation to other available indicators**

**- Examples**

- Cash in circulation (M0) → Size of the „grey economy“ (Studies of Prof. Schneider, Univ. of Linz)**
- Electricity consumption**
- Bread consumption**
- Other**



## **Stock results I: Illegal employment in Switzerland**

### **Piguet (2001)**

- **Survey of over 800 enterprises in Switzerland**
- **Sampling according to specific business branches**
- **Questioned as to the estimated share of illegal employment of foreigners in the own branch**

### **Various results depending on the choice of multiplier:**

- **Arithmetic Average (1.5% to 10.3% according to branch) → 182,556**
- **Median (0.1% to 10.0% according to branch) → 73,100**
- **Highly affected branches: construction, catering and hotelery**





## **Stock results II: The capture-recapture method in the NL**

### **Van der Leun et al. (1998)**

- **Analysis of police apprehension figures of foreigners**
- **In four cities: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag and Utrecht**
- **Estimation of relation illegally/legally present foreigners**
- **7.3% of 545.000 → 40,000 illegally present foreigners in 4 cities**
- **Projection to the whole of the Netherlands → 60,000**

### **Engbersen et al. (2002)**

- **Analysis of data from 25 police districts (1997-2000)**
- **Results → 112,000 – 163,000 illegally present foreigners in the Netherlands**



## **Stock results III: Evidence from regularization programmes**

### **Recurring regularization programmes in:**

- **Greece (2001 – current; up to 7/2001: 351,110 applications)**
- **Portugal (2001: around 90,000 regularizations)**
- **Spain (2000-2001: Total of 614,377 applications concerning some 350,000 persons leading to 334,000 regularizations)**
- **Italy (2002 – current; up to 3/2003: some 700,000 applications)**

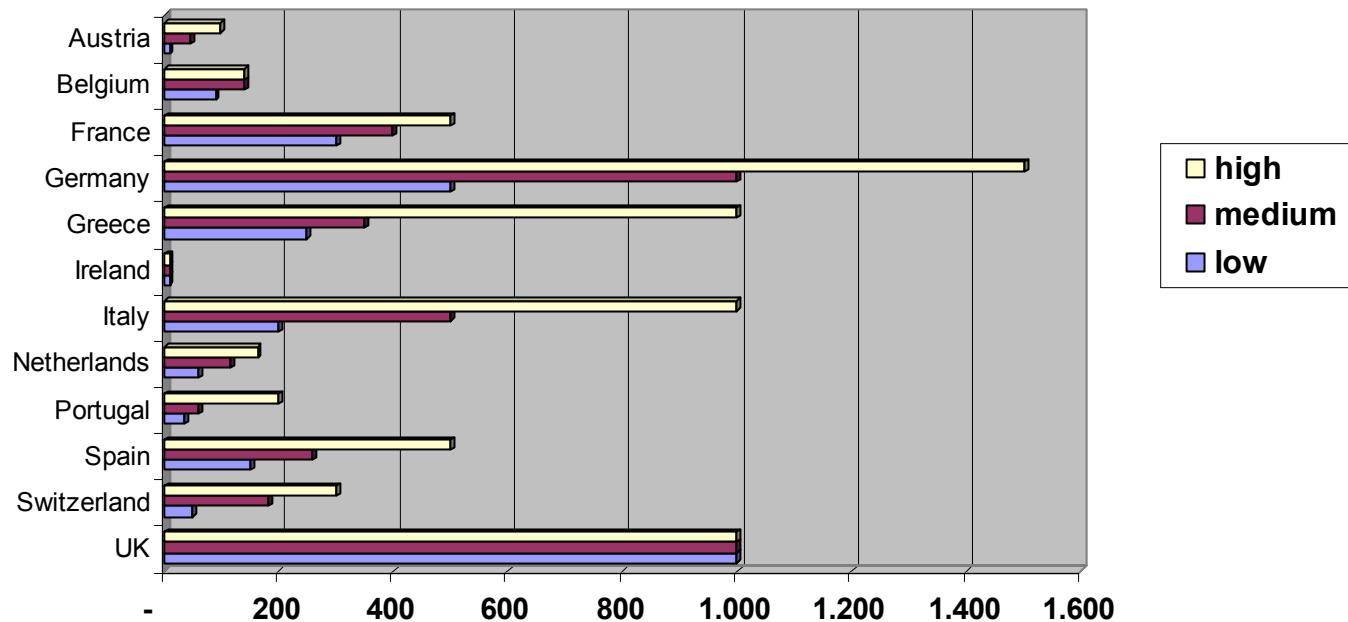
### **Problems:**

- **Number of applications is not the same as number of persons applying**
- **Wide differences in implementation (Italy – easier; Greece – difficult)**
- **Not all illegal residents apply; additional non-residents apply**
- **Persons regularized can fall back into irregularity**



## Stock results IV: The range of estimates in 12 European countries

Estimates of stocks of illegal migrants in 12 European countries (in 1,000)



Source: Jandl, 2003

Totals: Lower: 2.6 mio/Medium: 4.0 mio/Higher: 6.4 mio



## **Flow results I: Illegal immigration to Europe**

### **Problems:**

- **Very few sources**
- **EU-wide apprehension statistics are confidential (CIREFI)**
- **Varying methods**

### **Examples:**

- **Heckmann (2000): On the basis of EU apprehension data (260,000) and 2:1 multiplier → 400,000+**
- **BND (2001): some 1000/day to the EU**
- **Widgren (2002): On the basis of apprehension statistics and 2:1 multiplier and the share of irregular entries among asylum-seekers → 500,000 per year**



## **Flow results II: Illegal immigration to the UK**

### **Migration Watch UK (2002)**

#### **Three-part estimate:**

- 1) „Disappeared asylum-seekers“ (some 60% of total or 50,000)**
- 2) Visa-overstayers (1% of 3.6 mio visitors from non-EU countries or 35,000)**
- 3) Clandestine entries (ratio of 1:2 of 47,000 apprehensions in the year 2000 or 25,000)**

**Total:  $50,000 + 35,000 + 25,000 = 110,000$  illegal immigrants/year**



## Flow results III: Estimating the “correct multiplier”

### Example 1: Germany

- **2001: 113,000 apprehensions, of which 45,000 apprehensions at the border**
- **Multiplier = ?**
- **Indicator: of 17,000 asylum-seekers from Iraq (2001), only 3,000 had contact with the police before submitting an application (20 %)**
- **→ Multiplier of 5?**
- **Similar examples from Austria and Czech Republic (M=4 to 5)**

### Example 2: Greece

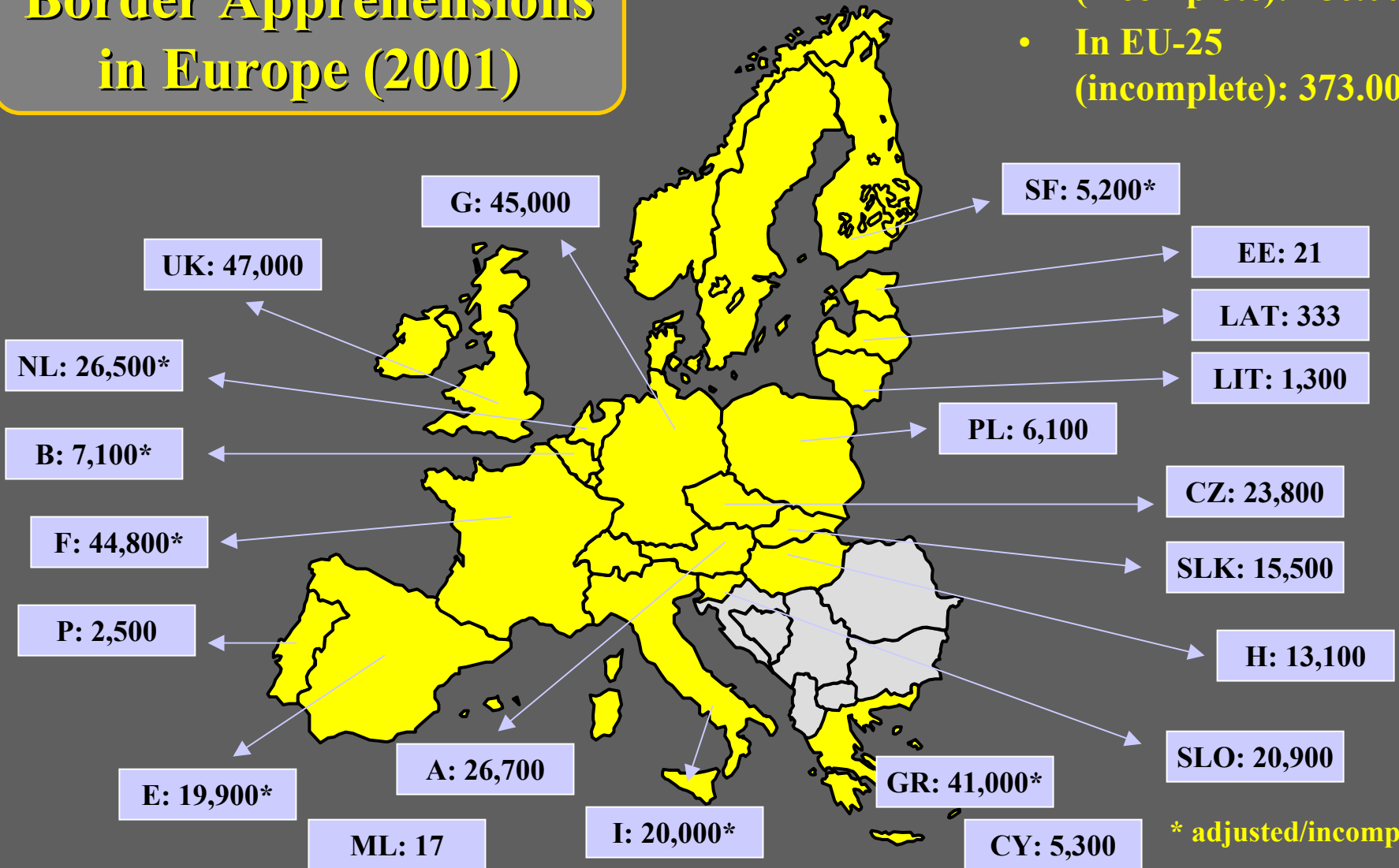
- **In 2001: total of 219,598 apprehensions, of which 167,168 from border guards and 6,864 from the coast guard**
- **75 % of apprehended migrants were Albanians (circular migration involving only short distances, multiple apprehensions likely)**
- **Multiplier = ?**



## Border Apprehensions in Europe (2001)

### Total border apprehensions

- In EU-15 (incomplete): 286.000
- In EU-25 (incomplete): 373.000



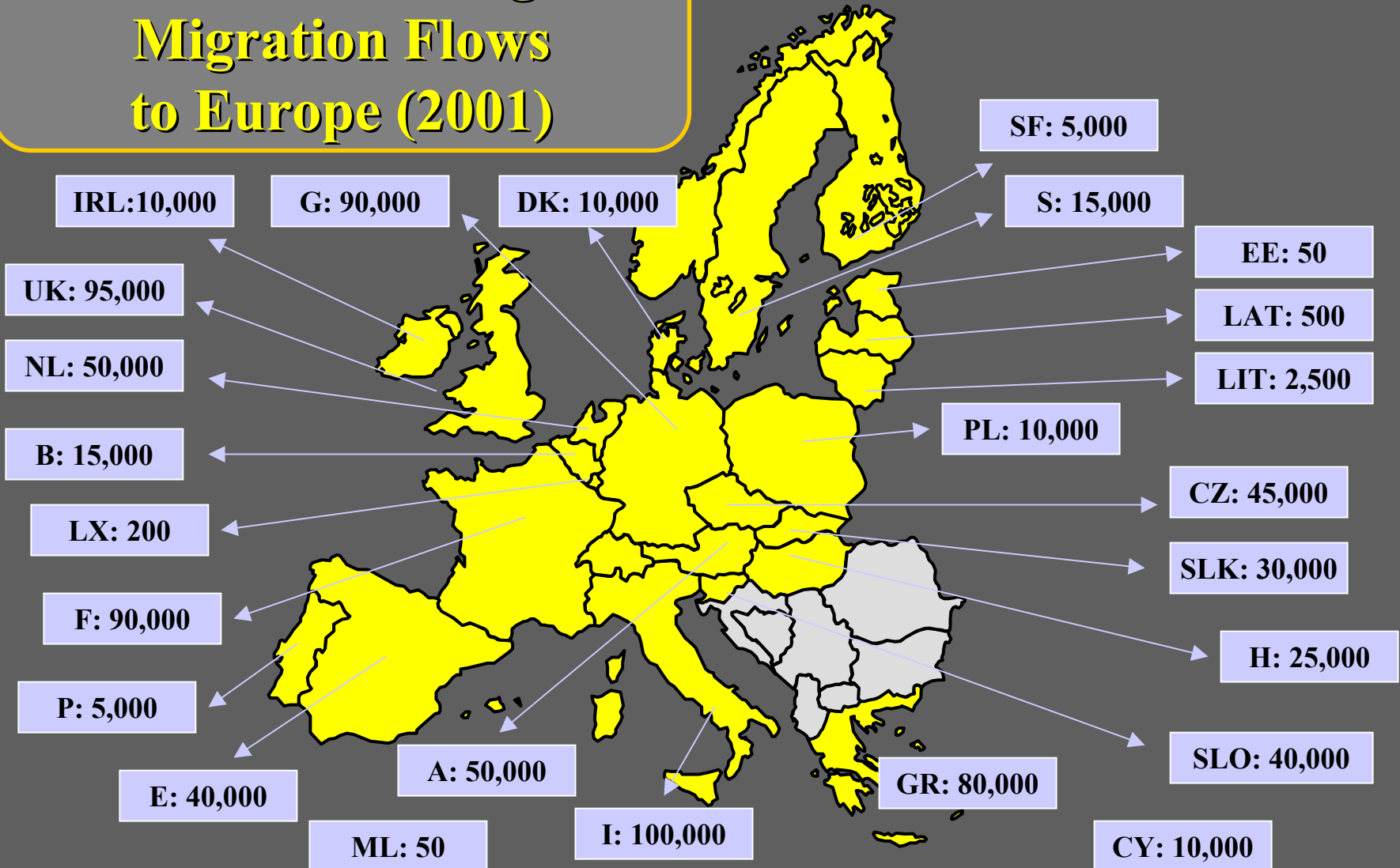
\* adjusted/incomplete



## Estimates of Illegal Migration Flows to Europe (2001)

### Total estimated flows:

- In EU-15: 650.000
- In EU-25: 800.000







## **The link between illegal migration and human smuggling**

- **Police authorities from various countries have estimated the proportion of „facilitated“ illegal entries between 30% - 80%**
- **The German BAFL made a survey among asylum-seekers in 2000 in which 2/3 of respondents claimed to have made use of a facilitator to enter Germany, only 6 % claimed to have arrived independently**
- **Europol (2001) estimated that about half of all illegal migrants to the EU had made use of smugglers**

### **Useful differentiation**

- **Long-distance migration (Iraq, Afghanistan, China,..) → very strong links**
- **Medium-distance migration (Ukraine, Turkey, Georgia,..) → strong links**
- **Short-distance/network migration (e.g. FRY) → weaker links**
- **Visa-free migration (e.g. Romania, Poland) → very weak links**



## **Estimating the size of the human smuggling industry**

### **Smuggling fees**

- **Long-distance smuggling (Iraq, Afghanistan, China,..):  
€ 3,000 up to € 40,000**
- **Medium-distance smuggling (Ukraine, Turkey, Georgia,..):  
€ 1,500 to € 6,000**
- **Short-distance smuggling/provision of basic documents (e.g. FRY):  
€ 200 to € 5,000**

### **Sizing up the human smuggling industry**

#### **Based on**

- **Apprehension figures + estimates of illegal migration**
  - **The geographical distribution of illegal and smuggled migrants**
  - **A differentiation of the links of illegal migration to human smuggling**
  - **A further differentiation according to smuggling fees**
- **The size of the industry can be estimated at some € 4 billion/p.a. for the EU-25**



## **An important note at the end**

**All estimates are fraught with substantial problems and errors:**

- **Varying quality/availability of apprehension data**
- **Methodological problems (what is the right „multiplier“?)**
- **Highly complex patterns of migration**
- **Highly dynamic changes in stocks and flows of migrants**

**Therefore:**

- **The figures provided can give only a very rough picture of the dimension of illegal migration to Europe and should not be seen as the definite account of the size of the phenomenon**
- Rather, the estimates provided should stimulate debate on how to improve our understanding of illegal migration to Europe.**