



**Circular migration patterns in Southern and Central
Eastern Europe: Challenges and opportunities for
migrants and policy makers
METOIKOS**

METOIKOS, First Project Meeting
29-30 April 2010, EUI, Florence



METOIKOS objectives

- **study in-depth three sets of countries** with a view to analysing the any circular migration movements, processes and policies from the point of view of the sending, receiving country and of the migrant her/himself.
- **systematic comparative analysis of circular migration processes and policies in** the south-eastern, south-western and central-eastern parts of **Europe**
- **the links between different types of circular migration and processes of integration (in the country of destination) and reintegration (in the source country)**



Countries studied

Six pairs of countries have been selected for the study:

- Greece and Albania,
- Italy and Albania,

- Spain and Morocco,
- Italy and Morocco,

- Hungary and Ukraine,
- Poland and Ukraine.



What does circular migration involve at minimum?

- the repeated crossing of borders (back and forth)
- not aimed at long term migrant settlement, and
- some degree of economic and social transnationalism in the form of participation in transnational migration networks that actually facilitate circular migration (moving and returning).



Related concepts and phenomena

- Temporary and seasonal migration
- Migrant economic transnationalism
- Development and re-integration policies in countries of origin/return
- Integration policies and legal statuses available in countries of destination
- Programmes aimed at circular mobility



European Commission - definition

- 'policies to maximise the developmental impact of temporary migration... should focus on encouraging circular migration, by giving a priority for further temporary employment to workers who have already worked under such schemes and have returned at the end of their contract, and also by offering appropriate rewards to participating migrants' (EC 2005a: 7).

The views expressed here emphasise that the same person will move repeatedly and also that circular migration policies should reward those who comply with the conditions of circular mobility.

- circular migration involves short term or medium term movement, flexibility in the type of work and type of permit that the migrant has, and facilitation of re-entry



Definition by Newland et al.

- '[W]e have developed a more dynamic notion of circular migration as a continuing, long-term and fluid pattern of human mobility among countries that occupy what is now increasingly recognised as a single economic space.'
- 'Circular migration is distinct from temporary migration in that circular migration denotes a migrant's continuous engagement in both home and adopted countries; it usually involves both return and repetition. Circularity produces the most positive outcomes when migrants move voluntarily between countries to pursue various interests (..) Beyond economic considerations, people also circulate to pursue philanthropic activities, to be close to family, and to seek educational opportunities, among many other reasons. Positive outcomes are less likely to occur when migrants are compelled to return periodically to their home countries simply to avoid permanent settlement.'



Dimensions that define circular migration

- *Space.*
 - *Time*
 - *Repetition*
 - *Scope*
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- Thus we define circular migration **as international, temporary, repeated migration for economic reasons.**



A typology of circular migration

needs to take into account at least **three dimensions**:

- First, the legal or irregular nature of the movement – and hence the regulated or unregulated character of the phenomenon.
- Second, the level of skills and education of the people involved (semi/low-skilled vs. high-skilled). And
- third, the time length of each stay and return (short-term, medium-term and long-term circularity).



Circular migration typology to be developed in METOIKOS

Time factor:

- repeated short stays within one year;
- short stays of between 6 months and a year that follow an annual cycle; and,
- long term circular migration (stays of a couple of years in each country (origin and destination)).

Legal status

- bilateral agreements between two countries
- Circular migrants who hold permits/identity documents that allow them (generally or under certain conditions) to engage into circular mobility
- Circular migrants that cross borders illegally.

Skills factor

- Manual workers (farm workers, cleaners, builders)
- Semi-skilled workers (tourism, catering, construction or caring/cleaning jobs in specialised positions)
- High-skill workers (entrepreneurs, scientists, managers)



Factors that condition circular migration

- Existing cultural, linguistic and ethnic ties
- Demographic factors: young age
- A culture of circular migration developing in a community (e.g. village, region)
- Legality of the movement



How to study integration and reintegration challenges in relation to circular migration

In particular we shall seek to re-conceptualise integration as a process that may involve **two locations** (integrating in two societies rather than one) and **multiple levels of engagement** (social, economic, political).

We shall consider integration and re-integration at three different levels:

- from a **legal** viewpoint (migration status and rights),
- from an **economic** perspective (labour market position and socio-economic mobility opportunities), and
- at the **socio-political** level (use of social services, participation in public life and politics, feelings of belonging).



Methods adopted for the study

- review of the relevant scholarly literature
- review of the relevant legislation and other policy documents and collection of statistical data (where available)
- qualitative interviews with policy makers and other stakeholders
- qualitative interviews with circular migrants



Scope of fieldwork in complementing existing literature

We shall map the different types of circular mobility that exist in each pair of countries and their main features:

- **Time length** of circularity (several weeks/months/years)
- **Repetition**: emerging circularity (2 circular movements) vs. established circularity (3 or more repeated movements)
- **Level of skills** of migrants involved and **labour market sector**
- **Legal or irregular movement** – regulated or unregulated pattern
- **Spatial dimension**: circularity takes place between specific regions or between the two countries more broadly
- **Primary motivation** for movement: unemployment/poverty or improvement of life chances and of employment conditions
- Family situation
- Gender dimension



How to proceed

- Discuss concept – working definition
- Presentation of background reports
- Plan fieldwork
- Pilot interviews – review interview guides



Phase	Activity	Period	Description of tasks	Output
Phase 1	Preparation	January-February 2010	drafting background reports on each case study, planning of fieldwork, setup web site,	Background report Project web site
Meeting 1, Florence		29-30 April 2010	Presentation of background reports and planning ahead	Minutes of meeting
Phase 2	Conduction of fieldwork	March-November 2010	Conduction of interviews with policy makers/stakeholders and with circular migrants, transcription and translation where necessary	Interview transcripts
Meeting 2 via Skype		Late June 2010	Discussion of fieldwork progress, problems arising and solutions	
Meeting 3		Late November 2010	Discussion of dimensions for analysis and plan of dissemination activities	Minutes of Meeting
Phase 3	Analysis of data	December 2010-February 2011	Analysis of data, interviews and other materials, drafting of case study reports	Case study Reports
Phase 4	Comparative Analysis	January-May 2011	Drafting of comparative analysis, and preparation of guide for policy makers	Comparative Report Guide for Policy Makers Preparation of book manuscript on Circular Migration and (Re-)Integration in Europe
Phase 5	Dissemination	Dec 2010-May 2011	Organisation of Regional Workshops with stakeholders from countries involved and from other EU and neighbouring countries if relevant. Dissemination of reports and project activities through the web site and automatic alert lists.	3 Regional Workshops Online dissemination Translation of guide for policy makers into 11 EU languages