



## **Submission to the *Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality* on Integration, Multiculturalism and Racism**

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### **Monitoring Migrant Integration in Ireland**

The Annual Monitoring Report on Integration 2012 was published in June of this year. It is the third in a series of four reports. These reports are commissioned by the Integration Centre and compiled by a team of researchers based at the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) in Dublin. When the fourth and final report in this series is complete and published, the future of monitoring integration in Ireland is uncertain due to lack of funding. In the following we outline why it is important to monitor integration, and highlight some key findings from the latest integration monitor.

#### **1. Why monitor migrant integration?**

As members of the Committee will be aware, following decades of emigration, in recent years there has been a rapid increase in the number of non-Irish nationals coming to live and work in Ireland. Figures from Census 2011 show that the non-Irish share of the population doubled in under a decade, growing from 6 per cent in 2002 to 12 per cent in 2011 (CSO, 2012). This has brought both challenges and opportunities for Irish institutions, Irish people and Irish society in general. The active participation of immigrants and their children in both the labour market and public life is crucial for both immigrants' ability to function as independent and productive citizens, their acceptance by the host population and more broadly for social cohesion in Ireland. This challenge becomes greater during periods of economic recession, such as that currently experienced in Ireland, as access to jobs and resources becomes more limited.

International experience tells us that the consequences of failed integration may manifest themselves in a myriad of ways, from early school-leaving and residential segregation, to ghettos, criminality, social conflict and race riots. In order to properly respond to the ongoing changes in Irish society, both positive and negative, and to plan for future change, it is imperative that we monitor the integration of immigrants into Irish society on an on-going and timely basis.

Note the integration of immigrants is not just an issue in Ireland, but high on the policy agenda of many OECD countries, from a social and economic point of view (OECD, 2012). In July 2011 the European Commission proposed a new *European Agenda for the Integration of non-EU Migrants*. This policy focus has been accompanied by an awareness of the need to monitor integration: one of

the Common Basic Principles for immigrant integration policy is that developing clear indicators is necessary to adjust policy and evaluate progress on integration.

Indeed many other European countries regularly monitor migrant integration, including the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden. These integration monitors are typically government funded, though sometimes carried out by independent research institutes or a statistical agency. They are carried out on a regular and continuous basis.

## 2. The Irish Integration Monitor 2012

The rest of this submission presents selected findings from the Annual Monitoring Report on 2012. The full report is enclosed with this submission for interested Committee members: it is also available at [www.esri.ie](http://www.esri.ie). This is third in a series of four Annual Integration Monitors, which measure migrant integration in four life domains – employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship. Each Annual Monitor contains a special theme on migrant integration, the annual theme in 2012 report was: changing Irish attitudes to immigrants, which is based on original analysis of data from the *European Social Survey*.

This Monitor aims to provide a balanced and rigorous assessment of the extent of integration of immigrants in Ireland using the most up-to-date and reliable data available. The framework for that assessment is based on the set of integration indicators proposed at the fourth EU Ministerial Conference on Integration held in 2010, known as the “Zaragoza indicators”. A number of key principles guided the choice of the Zaragoza integration indicators. These indicators should be based on existing and comparable data for most Member States, limited in number, simple to understand and focused on outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1 Employment Indicators

The chapter on employment presents core labour market indicators for the working age population in early 2012: employment, unemployment and activity rates (see Table A1).

<b>Table A1 Employment, Working Age (2012)</b>	<b>Irish</b>	<b>Non-Irish</b>
Employment Rate	58.2%	58.9%
Unemployment Rate	14.7%	18.5%
Activity Rate	68.2%	72.3%

*Source:* QNHS, 2012 Quarter 1 for Employment Indicators.

In early 2012 employment rates were similar among Irish and non-Irish nationals, though immigrants have somewhat higher labour market activity rates than the Irish population, due to their smaller share of inactive groups such as students, retired people or people with home duties.

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<sup>1</sup> Swedish presidency conference conclusions on indicators and monitoring of the outcome of integration policies and proposed at the ministerial conference in Zaragoza, Spain (European Ministerial Conference on Integration, Zaragoza, April 2010).

Ireland is currently in the depths of a deep and prolonged recession. Overall immigrants have been harder hit by the recession, and the unemployment rate for non-Irish nationals is higher than for Irish nationals. Africans have the highest rate of unemployment, followed closely by UK nationals, and then 'Rest of the World', including non-EU Europeans. Among non-Irish nationals, the unemployment rate is low for EU13 nationals (EU15 excluding Ireland and the UK) and North American/Australian nationals.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2 Education Indicators

The first part of the chapter on education compares educational qualifications among adults (Table A2).

<b>Table A2. Education (2012)</b>	<b>Irish</b>	<b>Non-Irish</b>
Share of 25-34 year olds with tertiary educational attainment (degree level or higher)	48.1%	53.5%
Share of early leavers from education (20-24)	10.5%	16.8%
Mean achievement scores for 15 year olds in English reading (2009)	502	English speakers: 500 Non-native English speakers: 443
Share of students achieving Level 1 or lower in English reading (2009)	15%	31% (first generation)

Source: QNHS Quarter 1, 2012, except achievement scores, which are based on PISA data 2009.

Comparing the proportion with tertiary education among 25-34 year olds in 2012, a higher proportion of non-Irish nationals have third-level education (Table A2). Comparing educational disadvantage, a higher proportion of young non-Irish adults (20-24 year olds) have left school before finishing second-level education than Irish adults (see Table A2). This is particularly true of EU12 nationals.<sup>3</sup>

The second part of the chapter presents academic achievement scores of 15 year olds in 2009. One striking finding from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is that while 15 per cent of Irish nationals achieve level 1 or lower in reading, this is true of 31 per cent - almost one third- of first generation immigrants.

## 2.3 Social inclusion Indicators

Income, poverty, home ownership and health are used as core indicators of social inclusion (see Table A3).

<sup>2</sup> EU13: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden.

<sup>3</sup> EU12: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

<b>Table A3 Social Inclusion (2010)</b>	<b>Irish</b>	<b>Non-Irish</b>
Median annual net income (needs adjusted)	€18,709	€17,731
At risk of poverty rate	14.5%	16.4%
Consistent poverty rate	6.1%	7.8%
Share of population (16+) perceiving their health as good or very good	82.6%	89.7%
Proportion of households that are property owners	77.9%	28.0%

Source: EU-SILC, 2010.

Once income is adjusted for household needs (the number of children and adults in the household), the median income for non-Irish nationals is slightly lower than that of Irish nationals in 2010. The 'at risk of poverty rate' and the 'consistent poverty' rate, which takes into account the experience of deprivation as well as income poverty, are both somewhat higher for non-Irish nationals than for Irish nationals.<sup>4</sup> The consistent poverty rate is 12 per cent among non-EU nationals - over twice the rate for Irish nationals - and this gap has increased since 2009.

Non-Irish nationals report better health, on average. This is, at least in part, due to their age profile, as the population is younger. The UK group do not differ from Irish nationals, but all other groups report better health outcomes. Rates of home ownership are much lower among non-Irish than Irish nationals, as was the case in previous Monitors.

## 2.4 Active Citizenship Indicators

Three indicators were proposed at the Zaragoza conference to assess active citizenship: the share of immigrants who have acquired citizenship; the share of immigrants holding permanent or long-term residence permits; and the share of immigrants among elected representatives (Table A4).

### Table A4. Active Citizenship (end 2011)

Annual naturalisation rate (aged 16+)	7.4%
Ratio of non-EEA nationals who "ever" acquired citizenship to the estimated immigrant population of non-EEA origin, 16+	21%
Share of non-EEA nationals aged 16+ holding "live" residence permissions in reference year who hold Long-Term Residence	6%
Share of immigrants among elected local representatives	0.2%

Source: Citizenship and long-term residence indicators: Irish Naturalisation and Citizenship Service, Eurostat. Political participation indicator: Immigrant Council of Ireland.

During 2011, 9,500 non-EEA nationals acquired Irish citizenship. This represents 7 per cent of the adult non-EEA population at end 2011 (Table A4). Taking a longer-term perspective, between 2005,

<sup>4</sup> The 'at risk of poverty rate', which refers to the percentage of a group falling below 60 per cent of median equalised income, is the official poverty threshold used by the Central Statistics Office and agreed at EU level. Consistent poverty combines at risk of poverty with enforced deprivation of a range of items.

when records began, and end 2011, 34,500 non-EEA adults acquired Irish citizenship. This represents 21 per cent of the estimated adult immigrant population of non-EEA origin, resident at end 2011.<sup>5</sup>

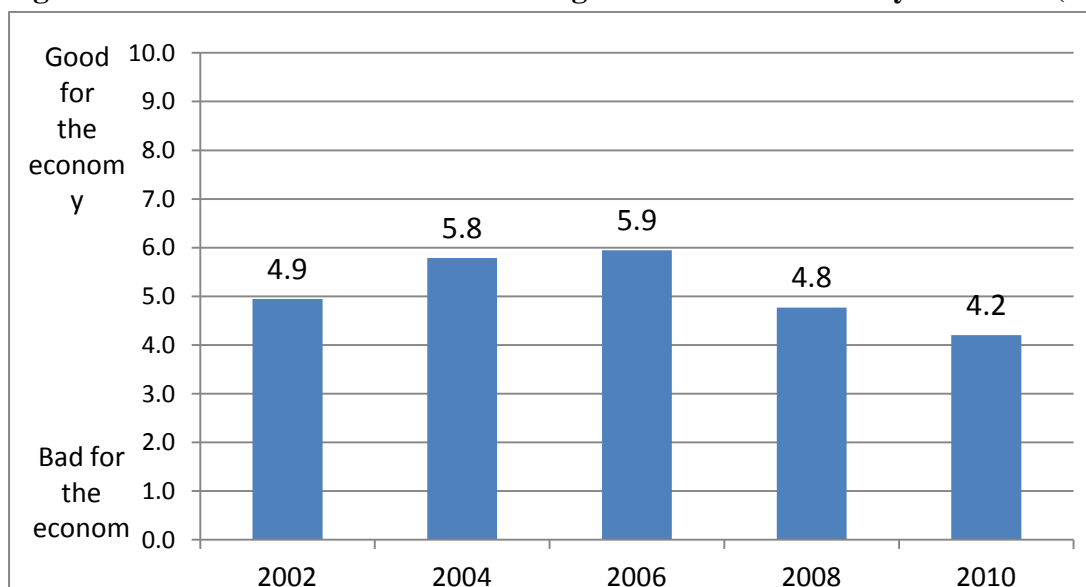
Ireland does not have a statutory long-term residence status, although one is expected in the forthcoming revised Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill. Under the current administrative scheme, the share of non-EEA nationals holding long-term residence permits at year end 2011 is estimated to be 6 per cent.

## 2.5 Special Focus on Attitudes to Immigrants and Immigration

The special theme in the 2012 Monitor was “changing Irish attitudes to immigrants”. This section uses the best available European attitudinal data, the European Social Survey, to examine attitudes to immigrants and immigration of the majority Irish population in the period 2002-2010.

The analysis suggests significant changes in Irish attitudes to immigrants and immigration between 2002 and 2010. Attitudes to the contribution immigrants make to the economy showed a clear rise in positive attitudes from 2002 to 2006, becoming more negative in 2008, and then again 2010 (Figure 1). Similar patterns are found for immigrants’ the contribution to cultural life or making Ireland a better place to live.

**Figure 1 Mean scores in attitudes to immigration and the economy over time (Ireland)**



Source: European Social Survey, calculations are based on proportions of the citizen population only

Openness to immigration, measured as three separate questions about willingness to accept immigrants of the same race/ethnicity, a different race/ethnicity and immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe, was higher in the early years of the decade, it fell in 2008, and then again in 2010. The evidence suggests that the economic recession and rapid rise in unemployment is playing a role in changes in attitudes. Positive evaluations peaked in 2006 and fell in 2008 and further in 2010, at a time when unemployment was rising rapidly. The suggestion that attitudes become more negative as the number of immigrants rises receives less credence, at least during the

<sup>5</sup> The estimate assumes that those naturalised in this period did not leave the State, and also excludes naturalisations pre-2005 as no data are available.

economic boom. It is perhaps more plausible that the growth in the immigrant share of the total population, followed by the economic recession resulted in increased concerns about, and resistance to immigration.

## 2.6 Policy Issues

The report is primarily concerned with assessing outcomes for immigrants. In chapter 7 we discuss a number of issues for policy emerging from the analysis of outcomes. The policy issues include the following:

- Unemployment is substantially higher among non-Irish nationals, so it is important that labour market programmes are implemented to ensure that vulnerable groups are integrated.
- Given that almost one third of first generation immigrants are below the basic level 1 proficiency in English reading, continuing cuts in the education budget for supports for English-language provision may have damaging long-term consequences. Given the negative trend in attitudes towards migrants in recent years, care should be taken in the discourse on immigration to avoid the growth of extremist and xenophobic sentiment
- This Monitor documents a rapid rise in the size of the naturalised population since 2010. Notwithstanding ongoing issues, such as the absence of administrative appeal and wide-ranging Ministerial discretion on decisions, recent progress in processing applications is very positive.
- To build on recent progress in processing naturalisation applications, a clearly defined, widely accessible long-term residence status would ensure naturalisation is not the only way for long-term migrants to achieve security of immigration status. Yet continued delays in enactment of the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2010 mean that Ireland remains without a statutory Long-Term Residence permission.
- There has been a substantial decline in funding allocated to the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration in the past two years. Budget cuts have hit most Departments, with consequences for mainstreamed integration initiatives. In addition, philanthropic foundations are likely to wind down in the medium term. These have been an important source of funding of non-Governmental organisations that support migrant integration through a range of measures and advocacy activity. This is likely to have implications for the integration of migrants.

At the core of monitoring migrant integration is the idea that governments can be aware of issues as they arise, and take early action to avert long-term consequences of failed integration.