Promoting Comparative Quantitative Research in the Field of Migration and Integration in Europe (PROMINSTAT)

FP6 Contract N° CIT5-CT-2006-028972

Project Summary

With the Amsterdam Treaty and the increasing competence of the European Union in the field of migration, integration, anti-discrimination and asylum, the need for comparative data in this area has been increasingly recognized. Social scientists, on the other hand, have a much broader agenda for comparative research, which goes beyond the immediate needs of policy makers and requires much more sophisticated data as well as knowledge about datasets that might be used for comparative research purposes.

The main objective of PROMINSTAT is to promote comparative quantitative research in the field of migration and integration. It will do so in three respects:

First, an online database will be established containing essential technical information on statistical datasets in 27 European countries (all EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland) as well as the variables included in these dataset. The database will be designed and established in the first half of the project. The database will go online on 1st of June 2008.

Second, national data collection systems will be systematically described in the form of brief country reports which will provide essential contextual information necessary to understand statistical data in the area of migration and integration more generally. The country reports will be finalised in parallel with the database. The country reports will be published on 1st of June 2008 on the project’s website (www.prominstat.eu).

Third, thematic studies will explore the possibilities for and the limitations on conducting comparative research in a number of different thematic areas in the broad field of migration and integration of migrants. A separate study will investigate the links between data needs of policymakers, data provision and data collection policies. The thematic studies will be the focus of the second half of the project. The publication of the thematic studies is foreseen for March 2009.

The project has started in March 2007 and will end in August 2009.
Project Outputs

1. The online database

One of the main results of the PROMINSTAT project will be a comprehensive inventory of statistical datasets containing migration related variables in all the 27 countries covered by the project. The relevant meta-information will be collected, described and fed into the electronic database during the first 14 months of the project. Although primarily meant as research tool for researchers in the field of migration and integration, the database also is intended to serve a wider audience. In conjunction with other project results that will be available from the project website the database will be a source of background information on statistical data on migration and integration in Europe useful for “ordinary” users of statistical data, including policy makers, researchers and others. The inventory will also be a useful tool to review the quality, adequacy and scope of statistical data collection on migration and integration by giving a much clearer picture on what kind of data are available, which thematic areas are sufficiently covered by existing datasets and to what extent data are comparable across countries.

The database will be set up by building on the FP5 funded COMPSTAT database (www.compstat.org), which was developed in an earlier project (Comparing National Data Sources in the Field of Migration and Integration – COMPSTAT) in 2001 and 2002. The main design of the database will remain the same. The forms used to collect and describe information on different statistical datasets will be considerably refined and additional types of datasets added. In the COMPSTAT project four main types of datasets were distinguished: census, registers, counts, sample surveys.

Similarly, the related website will be thoroughly revised and relaunched as the PROMINSTAT website.

In contrast to the COMPSTAT database, which only included datasets available as micro-data on the national level, the PROMINSTAT project will also describe datasets only available as aggregate statistics. As a result, the database will be a comprehensive inventory of (national) datasets relevant for migration and integration research. In addition to official statistical datasets, maintained by public authorities or national statistical offices, datasets produced for research purposes will also be covered to some extent, if their relevance justifies their description. In so doing, the project will also identify and document types of datasets that may provide innovative approaches to measure phenomena relating to migration and integration.

The database entries will consist of two sets of descriptions: In the general data file, the main technical characteristics of the dataset will be described, including universe of persons covered, ownership of the data, access to the data, sample sizes, publications and aggregate statistics based on the dataset, among others. In addition, there will also be free text fields in which country correspondents can add additional information. The variable file will contain the wording of the variable (in English), the definition of the variable and – if applicable – international standards to which variable definitions refer. The latter will also allow to monitor and evaluate to what extent variable definitions comply with international standards in these fields where such standards exist. Links to
(published versions of) international standard definitions as well as classifications will be provided as far as they are available.

The **online database** will be launched on **1st of June 2008**.

### 2. Country reports on national data collection systems

The country reports on national data collection systems are intended to provide a resource of information on the organisation of data collection, the types of sources available in a country, and strengths and weaknesses of national data collection in each of the 27 European countries covered by the project. The reports will give an overview over the recent evolution of data collection systems, analyse and evaluate changes in data collection and will outline planned changes of data collection and assess their possible impact. The country reports will make use of the related COMPSTAT country reports and similar research efforts elsewhere (notably the country reports written in the context of the THESIM project and country reports on measurement of statistics written by a team of researchers within the A1 thematic cluster of the IMISCOE network of excellence). Finally, the reports will analyse data collection on migration and integration in specific thematic fields, in particular those on which thematic studies will be produced during the second half of the project. In addition to analysing national data collection systems in regard to migration and integration, one of the main tasks of the country reports is to provide an evaluation of data collection systems and to make recommendations as to how data collection can be improved. The structure of the reports, their methodology and their scope will be elaborated by the work package leader (partner 4 – Gédap) in the second half of the first year of the project.

The **country reports** will be **published on the project’s website on 1st of June 2008**.

### 3. Thematic studies

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1 The main focus of the country reports was on whether Member States were capable of providing statistical data requested by the forthcoming EU regulation on Community Statistics on Migration, including whether MS are capable of providing data according to the breakdowns the EU regulations foresees. A second objective was to analyse what problems of comparability there were. Third, the country studies – as the THESIM project as a whole – analysed the relationship between the administrative processes (e.g. registration of the population, processing of asylum claims, issuing of residence permits etc.), datasets linked to these administrative processes and statistical data produced on the basis of these datasets (See Poulain et al.).

2 This group is coordinated by Ursula Reeger of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Information on this sub-cluster of Imiscoe cluster A1 can be found under [http://www.imiscoe.org/research/clusters/a1additional.html](http://www.imiscoe.org/research/clusters/a1additional.html). The focus of the research is on how to best measure migration flows and stocks and what the practice in various countries is. For this purpose the country studies also investigate specific (technical) aspects of data collection in each country which are relevant for the PROMINSTAT project, including for example inaccuracies of administrative datasets that result from timelags between actual emigration and deletion of the respective entries (Reeger, forthcoming).
Building on the information contained in the meta-database as well as on the country reports written during the first half of the project, a series of thematic studies will explore the availability, comparability and quality of statistical data in specific fields. In addition, they will assess the possibilities for and limitations on comparative research and will provide recommendations as to how the quantitative knowledge base in the specific fields covered can be improved. In the following, only the main tasks of these studies will be described. The methodology, scope and structure of the studies will be elaborated by the work package leader (partner 2 – efms) in close cooperation with the coordinator and discussed at the second project workshop. Three kinds of studies will be produced:

First, a study will be conducted by the University of Bristol on the information and data needs on immigration, emigration and integration from a policy perspective. It will investigate the various links existing between policy needs, data policies and actual data provision. In particular, it will focus on the information and data needs resulting from the evolution of a European migration regime and the implications for data collection. Focusing on both the national and supranational levels, the study will analyse the nature of policy makers’ information needs according to different types of policy interventions (short-, medium- and long-term strategic policy measures, as well as legislative development) and to their focus (public administration and administrative processes vs. societal groups targeted by policy interventions). The study will furthermore explore the extent to which policy needs could be met by data providers and how policies on statistical data collection could be devised and improved so as to contribute to this aim and aid strategic planning. The research will seek to disentangle the different raisons d'ètre of statistical datasets and to analyse the implications these may have. It will identify and distinguish administrative datasets which specifically target migrants (e.g. asylum database, residence permits databases), more general administrative datasets (e.g. datasets on social security), and datasets explicitly constructed for statistical (and by implication: scientific) purposes. It will build on this investigation to explore ways of improving the quality of administrative datasets by analysing successful examples across Europe. Finally, the study will investigate how comprehensive data collection policies can be developed to respond to data needs in a flexible, efficient and strategic way.

The second type of studies will consist of a mapping of statistical datasets in 13 thematic areas, resulting in specific assessments of the data situation and the possibilities and limitations for comparative research in these areas. The studies follow a thematic logic and will take into account all statistical datasets providing information on particular thematic areas. Thus, although they will review the most obvious datasets relevant to a particular thematic field,

3 The following thematic areas will be covered by the project: (1) population stocks and general demographic data; (2) migration flows; (3) legal status of immigrants; (4) acquisition of citizenship; (5) political participation; (6) employment; (7) income; (8) housing and living conditions; (9) irregular migration; (10) refugees and asylum; (11) family; (12) education; (13) health.

4 For example, while the census and population registers are obvious sources on population stocks, certain important demographical information may be only derived from other sources. In many countries this is the case in regard to the variable “country of birth” which may be derived from the labour force survey or still other sources. Similarly, while naturalization statistics are an important source for analyzing the
they will not limit themselves to these. The tasks of the studies can be summarised as follows:

- A first task of the study will be to describe the main research issues in a given field and to link it to a discussion of what kind of data would in principle be needed to address the issues under study.
- A second task will be to analyse the scope and the nature of the available statistical information on the topic under study in the 27 countries covered by the project.
- A third task of the study will be to analyse the comparability of data in this field across countries. A special concern in this regard is to what extent international standards are available and to what extent they are complied with. Third, the studies will also consider whether standards would be feasible in the thematic field under study and how such standards could be elaborated.
- A fourth task of the study will be to assess what kind of statements are possible on the basis of the available data and assess the possibilities for, and limitations of the available data for different types of research questions.
- The fifth and final task of the studies is to develop recommendations on how data collection can be improved, both from a more pragmatic country perspective, and in a comparative perspective.

The third set of studies will consist of two studies on exploring approaches to, operationalisations of, and possibilities for research on integration and discrimination. Since both concepts are multifaceted and rest on the availability of certain types of data in a range of thematic fields, the two studies will build on the second set of studies and will start only after some preliminary results of the former will be available. A main task of these studies is to identify different concepts of and dimensions of integration and discrimination, respectively, and to analyse the data implications of different concepts used. Secondly, they will discuss the strengths and limitations of different methodological approaches to the study of integration and discrimination, on the basis of available data in a comparative perspective. As there is a growing demand for information on both integration and discrimination, reflected by a growing number of publications and projects⁵, particular attention will be paid to take existing studies into account, to avoid duplication and to seek synergies with related projects.

Particular emphasis is laid on linking the three main tasks of the project with existing research and resources in this field, in particular with research on statistical sources funded by DG Research (COMPSTAT, THESIM, and NATAC) and acquisition of nationality, population register data is much better suited to undertake cohort analyses of nationality acquisitions. Similarly, to study the economic effects of citizenship a combination of (linked) data sources may be needed.

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⁵ On integration see for example the “INTPOL” study, one of three so-called feasibility studies of the IMISCOE network of excellence (Friedrich Heckmann et al. 2006) and a paper on integration indicators given by Jeannette Schoorl (NIDI) at the April 2005 Joint Eurostat/UNECE Seminar on Migration Statistics (Schoorl 2005). The heightened attention paid to statistical information on integration and integration indicators is also evidenced by the fact that the development of integration indicators is explicitly called for by the most recent call for projects in the INTI funding line.
research commissioned by DG Employment, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) and Eurostat. In particular, by reaching out to both stakeholders at the European level and established networks of migration specialists as the FP6 Network of Excellence Immigration, Integration and Social Cohesion (IMISCOE), it should be ensured that the project ultimately benefits both policy-makers and researchers, and thus support the overarching goal to ground policies on sound knowledge, while also enhancing the state of the art in migration statistics and promoting comparative research more generally.

The **studies will be published from March 2009 onwards** on the project’s website.

**References**


Technical Project Information

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