

Country Focus: Migration of Irish nationals during the crisis

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Background

This data on Irish nationals who have migrated during the economic crisis is the result of a shared initiative taken by research centres in Italy (European University Institute), Spain (Real Instituto Elcano), Portugal (Universidade de Lisboa) and Ireland (Trinity College Dublin) to study migration from Southern Europe and Ireland in the context of the international economic crisis. A total of 6,750 questionnaires were obtained from respondents including 363 Irish nationals.

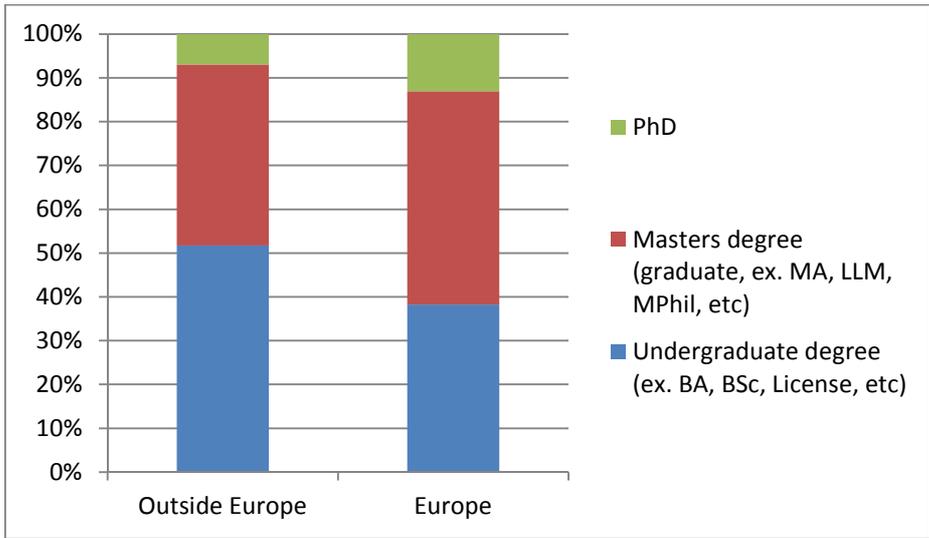
The data set was generated by an e-survey open between 21st May and 18th August 2013. While not representative of all the people who have left Ireland during this period, it presents new comparative insights into the socio-demographic profile, educational and professional background of people who have left Southern Europe and Ireland over recent years, and their destinations and experiences in the destination countries. It also explores their family situations and their intentions to settle in the destination country or return to the country of origin. The e-survey also included four open questions providing rich additional qualitative information.

This report provides some results of our initial analysis of the Irish data, focusing on Irish citizens who left the country after 2007 and highlighting variation in the experiences of those who have chosen to move to countries within or outside of Europe. Of particular interest to the development of an integrated European labour market are findings on the opportunities and constraints regarding migration to other European countries, compared to destinations outside of Europe.

First results

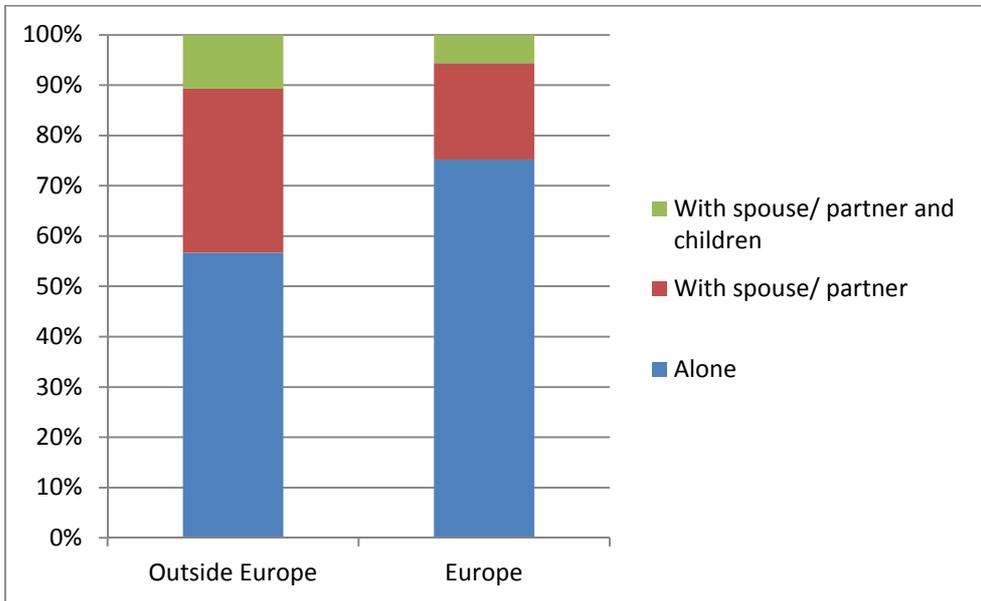
A highly educated, mobile population: 93% of respondents in Europe have a university degree and nearly 70% had already lived in another country other than Ireland prior to moving. A larger proportion of respondents who have moved to a European destination have postgraduate education (62% compared to 48% of those who have moved to a non-European destination).

Figure 1. Q. If you hold a higher education degree (University or similar) please indicate:



The majority of respondents were under the age of 30 and this was particularly the case among those who have moved to another European country (64% compared to 53%). Related to this, those who have moved within Europe more often moved alone (75%) compared to those who have moved to non-European destinations (57%).

Figure 2. Q. With whom did you move?



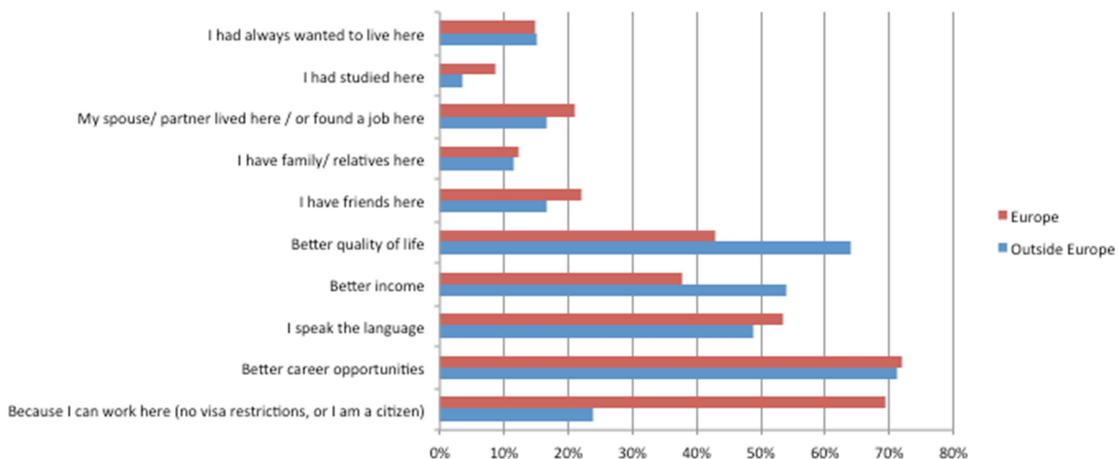
Unemployment was not the most common reason cited for leaving Ireland with under one fifth of respondents citing it. The most significant motivating factors for out-migration were desire for a new experience, academic/professional training and a sense of not having a future in Ireland. The latter was a stronger motivating factor for those who have moved to countries outside of Europe, while academic/professional training was the most significant reason for those who have moved to another European country.

Figure 3. Q. What were your main reasons for leaving?



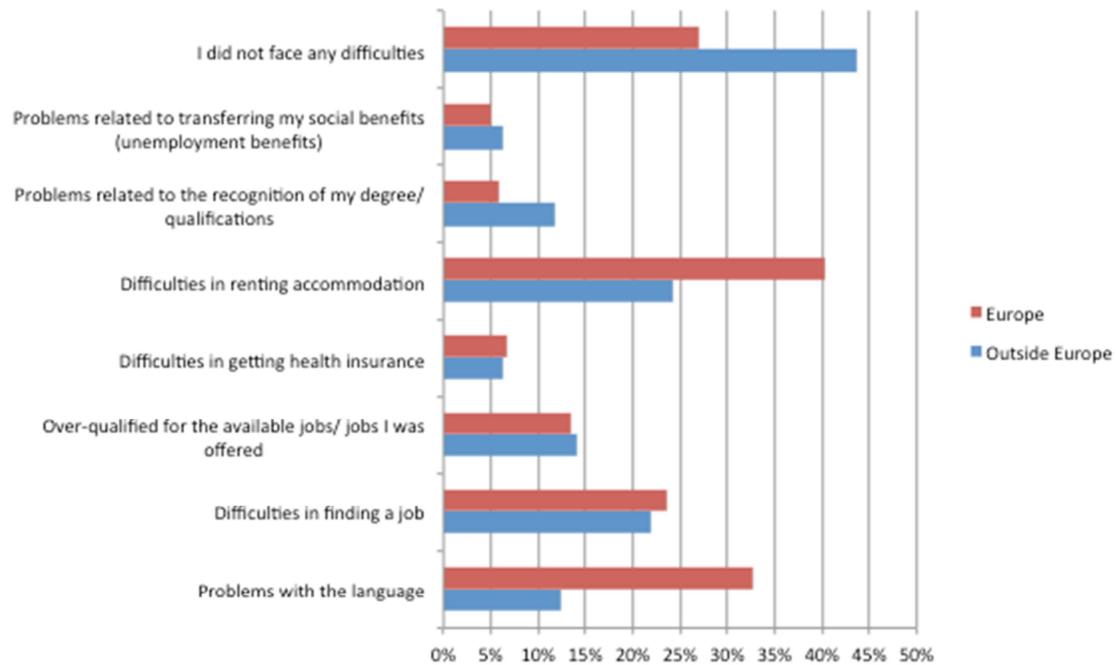
Overall, better career opportunities in the country of destination were the main pull factor in decisions to migrate to particular states. Unsurprisingly, nearly 70% of those who have moved to another European country cite the lack of visa restrictions as reason for choosing to move within Europe. While a better quality of life and income is a significant reason for migrating to non-European countries, speaking the language and having family and social networks are more frequently mentioned reasons for choosing to move within Europe rather than outside of Europe.

Figure 4. Q. What reasons made you choose this country?



People who have migrated to a non-European destination face fewer difficulties in settling in than those who have moved within Europe. Difficulties renting accommodation and problems with the language are the most common problems encountered in other European countries, with over a third of respondents citing them.

Figure 5. Q. What kind of difficulties did you face while settling in this country?



Initial analysis of the qualitative data finds the following factors to be significant drivers of out-migration from Ireland:

- precarious work and a lack of career prospects;
- mistrust in the political system;
- and difficulties finding decent, affordable accommodation.