

# Imagining Europe from the Outside (EUMAGINE)



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Media stories on the plight of migrants trying to enter Europe often give the impression that Europe is perceived as a 'promised land' or 'El Dorado' and that this is what drives migration. So far, little research has been done to investigate whether this is actually the case. It remains unclear how perceptions of life 'here' and 'there' come about and how they are linked to migration aspirations and intentions. EUMAGINE is a three-year project (2010-2013) in which 30 researchers in seven countries are working to address these research gaps.

## Project objectives

EUMAGINE aims to understand how 18–39-year-olds in *Morocco, Senegal, Turkey and Ukraine* relate to the possibility of migration. Most previous studies on migration have focused on the impact of economic push-and-pull factors or the role of transnational social networks in the creation of migration aspirations and the choice of destination country. EUMAGINE takes an innovative approach by looking at the role of *imaginings and perceptions*.

The project will investigate people's attitude to migration both as a valuable life project – 'migratory imaginings' – and in terms of the meanings and

images that make up people's subjective conception of particular places, including Europe – 'geographical imaginings'.

We assume that discourses in policy, media and popular culture all influence how people in countries of origin and transit perceive migration, human rights and democracy. EUMAGINE examines what people in our four countries of study imagine life in Europe to be like, how these imaginings compare to their evaluation of life in their countries of residence, and how these relative perceptions feed into their migration aspirations.

A key question is how perceptions of human rights and democracy in Europe and their country of residence affect people's migration aspirations. 'Human rights' is understood to include both negative (e.g. democracy, individual liberties, freedom from discrimination) and positive rights (e.g. a right to social security, health care, education).

EUMAGINE compares the impact of perceptions of human rights and democracy with the effect of other determinants of migration aspirations and intentions. It also explores how people compare Europe to other migration destinations and how perceptions of human rights and democracy inform these comparisons.

## Methodology

EUMAGINE uses a cross-national and cross-regional mixed-methods research design. A case-study approach is adopted; four countries of origin and various types of regions within these countries are systematically being compared and contrasted. The selected countries not only have a significant history of emigration, but in recent years have also been receiving more and more immigrants. Part of this immigration is transit migration; people migrate to these countries as a stepping stone for migration to Europe.

Within each country, four research areas with different characteristics are studied:



Calling charges in a phone shop in Fatih, Istanbul.  
Photo: Evelyn Ersanilli

	Morocco	Turkey	Senegal	Ukraine
<b>High emigration</b>	Todgha Valley	Emirdağ	Darou Mousty	Zbarazh Rayon
<b>Low emigration</b>	Central Plateau	Dinar	Lambaye	Znamyanska Rayon
<b>Immigration</b>	Tanger	Fatih	Golf Sud	Solomyansky Rayon
<b>Human rights</b>	Tounfite	Van Merkez	Orkadiere	Novovodolaz'ka Rayon

1. an area with high emigration rates
2. an area with a socio-economic position comparable to area (1) but with low emigration
3. an area with a strong immigration history
4. an area with a specific human rights situation

The target population consists of the general population aged 18–39 – the age group most likely to migrate – in each of the 16 research areas. This allows us to gather information on people with and without migration experience, and with and without migration aspirations. This will give us a better idea of the factors that shape migration aspirations and choice of migration destinations, and gives EUMAGINE an analytic edge over studies that only look at (return) migrants.

## Project team

The IMI team working on the project:

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The project coordinator is the Centre for Migration and Intercultural Studies (CeMIS), University of Antwerp, Belgium (Christiane Timmerman)

The other project partners are:

- Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), Oxford, UK (Franck Düvell)
- International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), Oslo, Norway (Jørgen Carling)
- MiReKoç, Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey (Ahmet İçduygu)
- Equipe de Recherche sur la Région et la Régionalisation (E3R), Université Mohamed V, Rabat, Morocco (Mohamed Berriane)
- Institut fondamental d'Afrique noire, Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD), Dakar, Senegal (Papa Demba Fall)
- Centre for Sociological Research (CSR), Ternopil, Ukraine (Yuriy Bilan)

## Phase 1

The first phase of data collection (in the first half of 2011) is a representative survey among 500 people in each of the research areas. Respondents are asked their opinion on several aspects of life in their country: economic opportunities, quality of public service and democracy, and gender equality. They are asked the same questions about their imaginations of life in Europe. The survey also inquires about previous migration experience, transnational contacts, migration imaginations, life satisfaction and socio-economic status.

## Phase 2

The second phase (in the second half of 2011) involves 20 in-depth interviews in each research area. Ethnographic fieldwork will be conducted in several sites in each research area. This fieldwork will look at the discourses surrounding migration.

The project consortium includes research institutes from the four countries of study. This will facilitate data collection and provide invaluable local expertise. It also ensures a non-Eurocentric perspective which will improve the data quality.

## Project funders

EUMAGINE is funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Programme and undertaken by a consortium of eight institutions.

IMI is a member of the Oxford Martin School at Oxford University, and recently received additional funding from Dr James Martin (founder of the School) to match the grant from the European Commission. EUMAGINE has theoretical and methodological parallels with other IMI projects, with which there is close collaboration: DEMIG, Global Migration Futures, and THEMIS.



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