Ad-Hoc Query on procedures for forecasting the number of asylum seekers

Requested by NO EMN NCP on 20th December 2010

Compilation produced on 20th January 2011

Responses from Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom plus Norway (16 in Total)

Disclaimer: The following responses have been provided primarily for the purpose of information exchange among EMN NCPs in the framework of the EMN. The contributing EMN NCPs have provided, to the best of their knowledge, information that is up-to-date, objective and reliable. Note, however, that the information provided does not necessarily represent the official policy of an EMN NCPs' Member State.

1. Background Information

The *Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Police (JD)* has asked the *Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)* to give a report on and evaluation of the methods used to forecast the number of asylum seekers for the next 12 to 24 months. In the reply to this request we are also asked to describe forecasting procedures used in other European countries, the sources of information that are being used and, in particular, whether formal statistical/mathematical models are used to prepare such forecast or parts of them. Thus we would greatly appreciate receiving information on the following issues – see question in the matrix below.

Please provide your much appreciated responses by **17th January 2011**.

2. Responses[1]

		Wider	1. Do you forecast the number of future asylum seekers to your country on a regular basis? (Yes/No).

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		Dissemination?[2]	
			2. If 'yes'; (i) for what purpose(s)? (Budgeting, operational planning or other). (ii) how frequently do you make forecasts? (iii) what is the forecasting horizon? (iv) what information is used as the basis of your forecast? (v) what tools do you employ in your forecasts? Do you use any formal mathematical/statistical model for (parts of) these forecasts? If 'yes', what are the 'inputs' to the calculations?
	Austria	Yes	1. No, Austria does not forecast the number of future asylum seekers on a regular basis. Very rarely, and only if required, such forecasts are calculated/estimated for certain periods of time. However no standardized, special tools or any formal mathematical or statistical models are used for such estimations.
	Belgium	Yes	1. In Belgium we do not forecast the number of future asylum seekers.
	Cyprus	Yes	The Asylum Service hasn't developed any tools regarding the forecast of the number of future asylum seekers."
	Estonia	Yes	1) Yes 2) (i) Forecasts are made mainly for the purposes of budgeting, resource planning. (ii) Forecasts are made four times a year and adjusted on a regular basis, if necessary. (iii) One year. (iv) Recent trends regarding the numbers of asylum seekers coming to Estonia, COI, migration trends and other information channels. (v) No formal mathematical model is used in order to produce forecasts. Analysis is mainly based on the recent situation in Estonia and the world concerning asylum seekers' movement.
	Finland	Yes	1. No. There are no formal procedures for forecasting the number of asylum seekers. The analysis is based on actual numbers of applications though some indications may arise upon which informal forecasts could be based. Those informal forecasts are for internal use only. 2. N/A
	Germany	Yes	1. Yes. 2. i) The forecast is used for resource planning, particularly for the planning of the required allocation capacities in the reception

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			facilities offered by the federal Länder (Section 44, subsection 2, Asylum Procedure Act). ii) The forecast on the development of the number of entries is constantly updated. iii) The forecasting horizon comprises several months; if needed, however, the forecast is constantly updated. iv) The forecast is based on the number of entries as shown in the statistics of the Federal Office, an evaluation of the situation in the countries of origin as well as other factors (e.g. expected effects of new visa provisions). v) The method consists of an experienced-based estimation and the facts available; it is not based on a mathematical or statistical calculation method.
	Italy	Yes	According to available information, at national level asylum applicants' forecasts are not implemented on regular basis.
	Latvia	Yes	Forecasts mainly are made for a year because the trends regarding the numbers of asylum seekers who have been coming to Latvia in the previous years remain stable and there are no essential changes. We are tracing the information relating to countries from where large groups of asylum seekers had arrived in previous year, as well as general migration trends in Europe, especially in the neighbouring countries.
	Lithuania	Yes	No
	Poland	Yes	Do you forecast the number of future asylum seekers to your country on a regular basis? NO
	Portugal	Yes	Due to the limited number of asylum seekers in Portugal, we do not forecast future trends on a regular basis.
	Slovak Republic	Yes	The Slovak Republic does not forecast the future number of the asylum seekers using mathematical/statistical models. From the practice in previous years we can conclude increase/decrease in numbers of the asylum seekers only in tenths.
	Slovenia	Yes	i) Do you regularly prepare forecast on the number of future asylum seekers to your country? (yes/no) When the MOI plans the resources intended for the accommodation of the applicants for international protection the trends of applications filed are considered. (ii) If 'yes: 1. For what purpose(s): (budgeting, operational planning, other) The trends of applications filed are considered both in planning the resources for accommodation and supplies of applicants and the

			resources by which various programmes are funded in which the applicants participate in the Republic of Slovenia.
			
			2. How frequent?
			
			Due to the fact that the resources are planned yearly the trends concerning the applications filed are considered for the period of at least three years.
			
			3. With what forecasting horizon?
			
			A period of three years is considered in planning the resources, depending on the trend.
			
			4. On the basis of what information?
			
			In planning the resources we consider the trend of applications filed in Slovenia as well as the average number of days spent by applicants in Asylum Centre.
			
			5. With what (formal) tools?
			    (a) do you use a formal mathematical/statistical model for (parts of) these forecasts?
			        If 'yes': What are the 'inputs' to the calculations?
			
			Based on the information gathered we first calculate the price of one day spent in AC (this calculation is based on the operational costs, costs of supplies and salaries of the staff but the salaries can be excluded). Based on the estimated value of the day and the average number of days spent in AC we calculate the costs of supplies for applicants in a year. We consider this in yearly planning of all the resources meant for the supplies of applicants.

Sweden		**Yes**	1. Do you forecast the number of future asylum seekers to your country on a regular basis? (Yes/No). *Yes.* 2. If 'yes', (i) for what purpose(s)? (Budgeting, operational planning or other). Forecasts are made for the purpose of budgeting and operational planning. (ii) How frequently do you make forecasts? Forecasts are made five times a year as a part of the internal steering process and external governmental budgeting process. The government (department of Justice) can make their own, and different, assessments based on the assessments made by the Migration Board. The forecast is also a part of a more strategically horizon planning for the authority.

			(iii) What is the forecasting horizon? Five years. In practice two years with a simple projection for the next three years (iv) What information is used as the basis of your forecast? 1. Recent trends regarding the numbers of asylum seekers coming to Sweden and other European countries. 2. Information on changes in policy in Sweden and in other European countries. 3. Possibilities for forced return of different nationalities. 4. The situation in the countries from where large groups arrive from, both countries of origin and transit countries. 5. Migration trends in Europe. 6. Other information collected through various channels such as FRONTEX 7. Assessments of control instruments like the Dublin regulation and the VIS-system 8. Push and pull factors like relative recognitions rates (compared to other state), relative rules on family reunification, diaspora, interdependency between asylum and family reunification (v) What tools do you employ in your forecasts? Do you use any formal mathematical/statistical model for (parts of) these forecasts? If 'yes', how are your calculations made? Sweden is, as a EU-funded project, trying to implement a simulation model for the whole asylum process, thus giving better possibilities to make calculations and prediction on the flow of cases and individuals in the asylum system. What-if scenarios is supported and budgetary and operational consequences could be estimated.
United Kingdom	**Yes**		1. Do you forecast the number of future asylum seekers to your country on a regular basis? (Yes/No). Yes 2. If 'yes', (i) for what purpose(s)? (Budgeting, operational planning or other). Budgeting and operational planning. (ii) how frequently do you make forecasts? They are revised as necessary, usually approx. every 6 to 18 months. (iii) what is the forecasting horizon? Three years, to fit with our financial planning forecasting horizon, with the expectation that the forecasts will be more accurate in the shorter horizons. (iv) & (v) what information is used as the basis of your forecast?

			The forecasts are based on a mixture of time series analysis (we currently use a mixture of Holt Winters and simple exponential smoothing) and assumptions on the expected impact of expected changes. These assumptions form a major part of the forecasts, and are typically a mixture of: initiatives brought in by UK Border Agency or external bodies to reduce unfounded asylum intake; initiatives brought in by UK Border Agency or external bodies for other reasons that might also increase or reduce asylum applications; and external factors that might increase or reduce levels of asylum applications. Because of this, the forecasts are sensitive and only shared on a need to know basis. We have attempted to use Delphi as a formal method to collate these assumptions, but now use a mixture of some aspects of the Delphi approach with meetings involving key partners.
Norway		**Yes**	1. Do you forecast the number of future asylum seekers to your country on a regular basis? (Yes/No). _Yes._ 2. If 'yes', (i) for what purpose(s)? (Budgeting, operational planning or other). _Forecasts are made for the purpose of budgeting and operational planning._ (ii) How frequently do you make forecasts? _Forecasts are made four times a year, but we assess the situation monthly and the prognoses can be changed more frequently if there are clear indications that the number of asylum seekers diverge significantly from the forecast._ (iii) What is the forecasting horizon? _Two years._ (iv) What information is used as the basis of your forecast? _1. Recent trends regarding the numbers of asylum seekers coming to Norway and other European countries._ _2. Information on changes in policy in Norway and in other European countries._ _3. Possibilities for forced return of different nationalities._ _4. The situation in the countries from where large groups arrive from, both countries of origin and transit countries._ _5. Migration trends in Europe._ _6. Other information collected through various channels such as FRONTEX and Front._ _The ten largest nationalities are examined individually._ (v) What tools do you employ in your forecasts? Do you use any formal mathematical/statistical model for (parts of) these forecasts? If 'yes', how are your calculations made? _No, we do not use such tools._

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