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Delegations will find attached the declassified version of the above document.

The text of this document is identical to the previous version.



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 13 March 2000

5938/00

RESTREINT

**CIREFI 9
COMIX 138**

NOTE

from :	CIREFI
to:	Migration and Expulsion, Visa and Frontiers Working Parties, Multidisciplinary Group on Organised Crime (MDG), Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum
Subject :	Annual report on illegal immigration and smuggling networks (1999) including latest developments for January 2000

Delegations will find herewith the above-mentioned report, based on information exchanged by delegations at the meeting of CIREFI/ Mixed Committee (Iceland and Norway) held on 3 February 2000.

This report is directly submitted for information to the competent working parties, as well as the Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum. In particular, the question of misuse of legal migration procedures for illegal migration purposes (e.g. in order to obtain family reunification or visas, through marriages of convenience etc) is brought to the attention of the Visa Working Party.

ANNUAL REPORT
ON ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND SMUGGLING NETWORKS

1999

I. General prospects and assessment of the situation

Finland. Illegal immigration is increasing gradually all the time. The most commonly used routes to enter the country are by air from anywhere, or across the Southern border (from Sweden, in particular). Illegal immigration from Russia to Finland has been successfully kept within reasonable limits.

The most common method to ensure entry into the country for illegal migrants is to apply for asylum when they are captured. In 1999 the number of asylum-seekers in Finland totalled 3 057 persons. The figure is nearly three times higher than in the previous year. The biggest group was Slovak Roma (1 527 persons), followed by Polish Roma (330 persons). A clear increase in the number of Russian asylum-seekers, 174 persons, was also noticed.

In 1999, a total 3 382 foreigners were refused entry at the border. At the Russian border the figure was 2 173 and at the Helsinki port (ferry traffic from Estonia) 885 foreigners. The persons refused entry were mostly citizens of Russia and Estonia. At the Russian border the most commonly used grounds for refusal of entry was the smuggling of extra alcohol and tobacco. The number of refusals of entry at the Russian border doubled compared to the previous year.

At the border between Finland and Russia, on the Finnish side (Finnish border guard) and on the Russian side (Russian border guard) a total 174 third-country nationals were captured. The persons tried to enter Finland by using fraudulent documents or by hiding in vehicles. A total 26 of different nationalities were registered, the most common being Slovaks (21), Poles (17), Turks (13), Palestinians (10), Lebanese (9) and Afghans (7).

30 human smugglers were registered by the police in 1999 and the number of smuggled persons totalled 97. The most common nationalities of smuggled persons were Palestinians, Turks and Somalis. The figures are at the same level as in the previous year. In most cases, the smuggler was a relative or a friend.

Germany. 37 789 illegal entries were detected in 1999, which represents a 6% decrease compared with the previous year. By contrast, the cases of smuggling detected increased by 4%: approximately 3 500 smugglers were arrested. The number of smuggled people (about 11 000) decreased slightly, and this signified a decrease in the number of major traffickers (smuggling more than 10 persons at a time).

The hot spots for illegal entries were the German-Czech border, followed by the German-Austrian border. Yugoslav nationality was the main nationality for both illegal entries and smuggling; however, a fall was registered during the last month of 1999. An increase was registered in the number of illegal entries by Afghan nationals; a slight increase was also registered in the case of Iraqis. A decrease was noticed concerning Romanians. Furthermore, Germany registered approx. 57 000 rejections, about 24 000 refusals and nearly 33 000 deportations.

Austria. 42 800 illegal entries were registered in 1999. This number was the double the number of 1993 (19 000). The reasons for this increase were manifold: an increased efficiency of detection capabilities, the Kosovo crisis and an increase in the number of Ukrainians illegally employed in Austria with expired Schengen visas.

The nationalities registered in 1999 were similar to those of 1998, i.e. Yugoslavs (3 800), Romanians, Iraqis and Afghans. An increase in the numbers of Armenians and Afghans was experienced. The number of Kosovo Albanians was on the decline. A movement of Iranians through Sarajevo was noticed: many applied for asylum then disappeared. A large number of illegal migrants from Asia reached Austria via Sarajevo.

The United Kingdom. A total number of 22 789 clandestine arrivals was registered in 1999 (not including those claiming asylum on arrival). This represents an 8% increase over 1998. A similar increase was registered as regards the figure concerning asylum detections (about 45 000). The combined figure was approximately 70 000.

The main nationalities concerned were the following: Yugoslavs, Kosovars, Albanians claiming to be Kosovars, Roma from Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The number of clandestine arrivals of Chinese nationals also rose from 1 200 in 1998 to 2 400 in 1999. The rate of removals did not keep pace with the rate of arrivals: a total of 5 000 removals were carried out in 1999.

180 persons were prosecuted for facilitation and 50 persons for other immigration-related offences. The United Kingdom authorities stepped up the number of operations to disrupt traffickers: they carried out 80 fairly large-scale operations and 27 intelligence-focused projects around the world with that objective.

The Netherlands. The number of asylum-seekers dropped by 13% to 39 299. The main nationalities were Yugoslavs, Afghans and Iraqis. A strong fall was reported in the case of Iraqis (-55%) and of Afghans (-38%). Significant numbers were also registered concerning nationals of Azerbaijan, Angola and Sierra Leone.

The authorities carried out an investigation concerning illegal arrivals of nationals of Azerbaijan and Georgia: this investigation produced a fragmented picture, which was not particularly helpful. According to information available, the price asked by smugglers increased and the traffic became more organized. In fact, 90% of illegal immigration took place with the assistance of smugglers.

Ireland. 3 456 migrants reached in Ireland illegally in 1999 (up from 396 in 1995). Some of them applied for asylum following refusal of entry. In total, 7 734 asylum applications were lodged in 1999 (compared to only 39 in 1992). During the period 1998-99, the main nationalities were Nigerians and Romanians.

No information is available on trafficking, as there is no legislation in Ireland punishing trafficking as such: the legislative process is at an advanced stage and the law will probably be adopted by the end of 2000. This law is expected to impose fines on employers for the illegal employment of migrants

Italy. 49 999 illegal migrants arrived on the coasts of Southern Italy during 1999, specifically 46 481 in Apulia, 1 545 in Calabria, 1 973 in Sicily. Compared to 1998, this represents an increase in absolute terms; however, the increase was not generalized.

In fact, the number of boat arrivals in Sicily (including Lampedusa and Pantelleria) declined in 1999. During the second half of 1998 alone, 4 281 illegal migrants had reached the coasts of Sicily (against 1 973 for the whole of 1999). This decline was due to the conclusion of readmission agreements with Morocco and Tunisia, providing, on the one hand, for specific cooperation with the consular authorities of these two countries to facilitate the release of travel documents and, on the other hand, for police cooperation entailing the granting of technical equipment and other materials to tackle illegal activities.

The situation of boat arrivals in Calabria was at the levels of 1998. It concerned arrivals on larger ships from Turkey, occasionally transiting through small Greek islands.

Finally, the number of boat arrivals in Apulia increased significantly in 1999. 30 141 of the persons arriving (almost 65%) were Yugoslavs, usually from Kosovo. Without the Kosovo conflict, the number of boat arrivals would have probably declined in Apulia as well. In fact, as far as Albanians are concerned, their numbers decreased to 7 156 in 1999 (during the second half of 1998 alone, 4 559 Albanians had arrived on the coasts of Apulia).

35 455 persons were expelled from Italy in 1999. 36 937 were refused entry at the border. 350 smugglers were arrested, mainly in Apulia, 241 means of transport were seized, of which 77 vehicles and 164 boats.

The main 10 nationalities of the illegal migrants in 1999 were the following: Yugoslavia, Albania, Kurds from Turkey, Iraq and neighbouring region, Romania, Morocco, Nigeria, Ukraine, Moldova, China and Tunisia.

Iceland. The situation did not change dramatically from 1998 to 1999. The number of illegal migrants was still on the rise. Most arrived with falsified documents or without documentation. A link was noticed between the people arriving and those residing in Iceland. The main countries of origin were Ukraine, Iraq and Albania. Almost half of the Kosovars who had been evacuated to Iceland had returned to Kosovo by the end of 1999.

Norway. 9 225 asylum applications were received in 1999. This figure constitutes a 10% increase compared to 1998 (with respect to 1997, the number has quadrupled). The largest group was Iraqis (3 829), followed by Somalis (1 202), Albanians from Kosovo (1 042; they represented 50% of all applications in 1999, compared to 30 % in 1998), nationals of former Soviet Union countries (740; their number almost tripled from 1998; 244 of them were from Russia). 85 different nationalities were represented on the list of applicants, which was a dramatic change from previous years.

12 750 persons were granted protection (up from 3 306 in 1998). 6 092 Kosovars were granted temporary residence on collective grounds. By 1 January 2000, 3 630 Kosovars had received financial support and returned to Kosovo. In addition, 1 865 Kosovo Albanians had been granted asylum before the collective temporary protection regime had been introduced in August 1999. Asylum was granted to 181 persons (3% of all decided cases). 1 437 applications had been previously recorded in Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Finland: 1 154 applicants asked for asylum in Norway with different identities.

Human trafficking was on the rise. Smuggling took place in cargo containers or trailers. Iraqis were mostly transported in car ferries from German or Danish ports. A number of Iraqis arrived also in campers across the border with Sweden (the example of one camper was cited, which was driven by a German national). Furthermore, a number of counterfeit Malaysian passports were used by nationals of Sri Lanka and Tanzania. They were well counterfeited, but contained spelling mistakes. Several Somali asylum-seekers reached Norway via Dubai. Many did not have travel documents.

Iraqis living in Norway are suspected of smuggling Iraqis to Norway. An investigation is under way. Cooperation between Denmark, Sweden and Norway is still in force in the framework of “Operation KATTEGAT”, aimed at detecting smuggling of Iraqis to Scandinavia. No arrest has been made yet in connection with this operation.

Greece. The number of detections of illegal migrants increased substantially in 1999 (from 145 740 in 1998 to 182 000 in 1999). Most were Albanians (approximately 150 000; this number has increased due to new measures implemented at the border with Albania since May 1999), followed by Iraqis, Romanians, Pakistanis, Iranians.

A movement of Asians was noticed transiting through Bulgaria and FRY, whereas the traditional route for Asians passed through Turkey. Detention centres had been set up at the borders with Turkey, FYROM, Bulgaria and Albania. More than 500 traffickers had been arrested in 1999: they were Greek, Turkish, Russian and Albanian nationals.

Problems were experienced in removing illegal migrants reaching Greece through Turkey, because of the modus operandi used by traffickers, who collect migrants in Turkey, bring them into Greece, from where they are taken on to other countries. Often they reach the Greek islands from Turkey on board boats of all sizes.

Denmark. The total number of asylum-seekers in 1999 was 11 700. The main nationalities were as follows: Iraqis (3 671, slightly less than 1998), Slovaks, particularly Roma (1 100, against 70 in 1998; a compulsory visa requirement was introduced on 1 December 1999, and the situation has developed since), Afghans (790, increase from 1998), Somalis (400).

22 100 Yugoslavs had arrived in 1999, largely due to the Kosovo crisis; not all of them had arrived illegally. 2 823 had been evacuated to Denmark for humanitarian reasons; 1 280 of them had returned to Kosovo with the option to return to Denmark within 3 months. 826 persons arrived from the former Soviet Union: the numbers of arrivals from Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan increased. 33 000 had arrived from Eastern Europe as a whole during 1999.

Spain. In 1999, 960 000 persons were refused entry at the border (including the borders of Ceuta and Melilla), against 767 765 in 1998. This represented a 25% increase; it concerned mainly nationals of Morocco, Colombia, Ecuador, China and Romania. The number of deportations was at the same level as 1998; it concerned nationals of Algeria, Morocco, Romania and Brazil.

Arrests for illegal stay increased by 22%, from 40 578 in 1998 to 50 000 in 1999; it concerned nationals of Morocco, Algeria, Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, Ukraine, China and Romania. A marked increase in the number of Ukrainians was recorded (from 238 in 1990 to 1 605 in 1999). Provisional data on asylum applications also indicate an increase; the main nationalities concerned were Algerians, Romanians, Armenians, Sri Lankans, Colombians and Ukrainians.

696 individuals were arrested in 1999 for trafficking of human beings, mainly Chinese, Moroccans, Ecuadorians and Ukrainians. 1 723 persons were smuggled (mainly Moroccans, Colombians, Ecuadorians, Ukrainians, Chinese and Brazilians).

Belgium. The situation for this Member State is described in the Annex.

In connection with the increase of illegal immigration from the former Soviet Union, the Belgian authorities are carrying out an investigation on trafficking networks from this area, and plan to set up a personalized database on the travel agencies involved in this traffic.

Sweden. 11 240 asylum seekers arrived in 1999. This represents a reduction compared to 1998. There was a decrease in the number of Yugoslavs, especially during the second part of the year. This figure does not include Kosovar asylum-seekers and those evacuated from Albania or FYROM. 70% of these people did not have documents, which made it difficult to assess their cases. Major efforts were made to intensify border controls (in particular at Stockholm airport and the Southern ports).

The top nationalities were Iraqis, Yugoslavs, Iranians, Bosnians and Romanians: these 5 nationalities account for 75% of all asylum applications. Iraqis also pose a major problem of identification. 90% of them lack identification documents. Removals can be carried out on the basis of the exchange of fingerprints in accordance with the Dublin Convention. A total of 7 700 asylum-seekers were undocumented, mainly Yugoslavs, Somalis, Afghans, Bosnians, Syrians, Turks and nationals of former Soviet Union countries. A great deal of time is spent trying to identify the persons, in order to remove them.

An increase in the number of nationals of former Soviet Union countries was registered during the summer and at the beginning of the autumn. 900 asylum-seekers arrived altogether, 450 of which from Russia. In the case of 900 persons the identification process is pending. 3 900 removal decisions were taken and 3 500 removals were implemented. 108 smugglers were discovered. During the second half of 1999, there was an increase in the number of Iranian asylum-seekers. Many of them obtained visas at the Swedish embassy in Iran and got rid of their documents once in Sweden, which made identification very difficult. In more than 30% of the cases, they were allowed to stay.

France. Migratory pressure increased at the borders. The number of refusals of entry rose by 15% to 46 973. The land borders are the hottest (above all, the French-Italian border), followed by the air border, whereas the sea borders do not pose significant difficulties.

The number of illegal migrants detected in the territory rose by 22%, and concerned mainly Chinese and Kosovo Albanians (whose number increased by 70%). Other significant nationalities were Egyptians (84% increase in the number of refusals of entry), Turks, Romanians and some Asian nationalities (Pakistanis and Chinese). The cases of detection of use of false documents also increased (+24%).

The number of asylum applications at the border increased to 5 615 (+80%). The main nationalities involved were Sri Lankans, Rwandans, Congolese, Indians and Palestinians. As regards the offences committed, 1 635 persons were prosecuted for illegal employment (+15%) and 958 for the smuggling of 1 700 people.

Portugal. Pressure continues to be high from Eastern Europe, Moldova and Ukraine. A number of nationals of these countries enter Portugal on short-time visas (10-15 days), normally tourist visas, obtained in Schengen embassies either in Western Europe or in Eastern Europe (Kiev, Kishinev, Bucharest), normally through agencies. As soon as they arrive in Portugal, they engage in clandestine work activities.

1 730 persons were refused entry (from Brazil, Angola, Ecuador). 2 644 expulsion procedures were started, 864 were decided and 479 took place, concerning mainly Moldovans, Ukrainians and Romanians. 1352 persons were readmitted by Spain, 2 by France and, for the first time, the readmission agreement with Poland was activated to expel two Polish nationals. 27 persons were prosecuted for trafficking: they are nationals of Moldova, Ukraine, China, Portugal and Guinea-Bissau.

The number of asylum applications stabilized (it concerns mainly Sierra Leoneans, Bosnians, Nigerians and Yugoslavs). 838 fraudulent documents were detected (the nationality of the documents: Portugal, Angola, Spain, Nigeria, Greece and Guinea-Bissau). 1475 applications were introduced for assisted voluntary return under the protocol with IOM; 164 persons returned (they were from Guinea-Bissau, Moldova and Ukraine).

A murder was committed in Portugal, which appears to be linked to the criminal activities (extortion and control of the presence of migrants) of an international criminal organization operating from Moldova and Ukraine.

II. Latest developments (situation as at 3 February 2000)

– General trends

Finland. In January 2000 the number of Slovak asylum-seekers totalled 174 persons. The flow stopped on 15 January 2000 when Finland reintroduced the visa requirement for Slovak nationals. The arrival of Polish asylum-seekers is continuing. In January 2000 a total of 123 Polish asylum-seekers entered Finland, mainly by ferry via Sweden.

Ireland. During January 2000, the number of asylum applications continued to rise (967 applications were registered), and the main nationalities were still the same (308 Nigerians and 326 Romanians asked for asylum).

Italy. No significant change was recorded on the coasts of southern Italy. 1 497 migrants arrived in Apulia in January 2000 (compared to 1 316 in December 1999 and 3 426 in January 1999), 22 arrived in Calabria and 236 in Sicily.

Denmark. The situation of January 2000 as regards the number of illegal arrivals reflected that of 1999 (224 Iraqis, 74 Afghans, 4 Slovaks). A slight increase was noticed from former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Belgium. Border controls were reintroduced at the Belgian borders between 10 and 30 January 2000, in accordance with Article 2(2) of the Schengen Convention. This measure was taken in view of the present situation, which is characterized by a significant increase in the number of asylum applications, a backlog in the asylum procedure, difficulties in returning certain nationals, and the illegal stay and employment of a number of these people. The Belgian authorities wished to detect new illegal immigrants, to prevent abuse of the asylum procedure, and to give a signal to illegal immigrants and smugglers.

In conjunction with this measure, Belgium adopted legislation to give a residence status to certain categories of people who were staying in Belgium and met particular criteria (the criteria and procedure foreseen by this legislation, which were outlined by the Belgian delegation at the meeting, are set out in 5940/00 CIREFI CIREFI 10 MIGR 16 COMIX 139). This was a one-off operation, which should enable the authorities to act more strictly in the future. It was planned to conclude the operation within a year. Between 35 000 and 40 000 third-country nationals had applied under this law.

During the period in which border controls were reintroduced, 130 000 checks were made on individuals at the border. 1 647 people had been refused entry for various reasons; the most frequent one was the absence of identity documents (432, mostly Turkish nationals, or claiming to be Kosovars, but suspected to be Albanians). Asylum figures dropped from over 4 600 applications in December 1999 to 2 795 in January 2000. During the last two weeks of January 2000, fewer illegal migrants were intercepted hidden in trucks and trying to travel illegally to the United Kingdom. The number of unaccompanied minors also decreased significantly. Although the border checks had to be discontinued, the authorities intend to continue spot checks in certain instances, e.g. on trains (one third of illegal migrants enter by train) or on suspect vehicles.

Another recent development reported by Belgium, concerned the discovery of a route, involving Pakistani businessmen, which is used to smuggle people into the United Kingdom via Belgium. The authorities began investigation after they intercepted a convoy and found by chance a telephone number, through which they discovered many victims of this organization, mainly Pakistanis, Albanians, Kosovars and Indians (smuggled at the pace of 600 to 800 per month). Two modi operandi were found. The first involves travel agencies in Pakistan, taking care of all the arrangements to obtain a visa in Pakistan (often stolen), on the basis of applications sponsored by Pakistani businessmen in Belgium; once in Belgium, the Pakistani migrant pays the organization, gives his documents away and moves on to the United Kingdom. A second modus operandi involves payments made to the organization in Pakistan, Belgium or the United Kingdom to obtain a transit visa for Belgium; once in Belgium, the persons disappear and travel to the United Kingdom.

At the request of the Belgian delegation, the matter will be specifically discussed at the next meeting.

France. Palestinians no longer pose problems, following the introduction of a transit visa requirement at the end of 1999.

Portugal. The flow of migrants from Eastern Europe continues.

– *Specific cases (e.g. incidents involving groups of illegal immigrants)*

The Netherlands delegation reported the following cases.

200 Roma flew to Amsterdam from Slovakia in January 2000 and applied for asylum. This was a big rise from December 1999 and from 1999 as a whole (when the total number had been 467).

A group of Somalis with Kenyan passports had left Mombasa in December 1999-January 2000, reached Istanbul and were headed for Amsterdam without visas. In Istanbul an immigration officer forced them back to Kenya.

A group of Afghans, holding genuine Pakistani passports with Austrian visas, tried to reach Amsterdam via the United Arab Emirates. They disappeared at the airport.

The Irish delegation reported that during the last week of 1999, 59 persons from Eastern Europe (mostly Romanians, with some Bulgarians) arrived on a boat from France and made themselves known to the crew before arrival. The procedure under the Dublin Convention is under consideration.

The Norwegian delegation reported the arrival on 5 February 2000 of 5 nationals of Azerbaijan hidden in a trailer on board a ferry from Denmark.

The Spanish delegation reported a vast police operation to break up an international organization involved in the exploitation of Chinese, mainly Chinese women taken into prostitution. The Chinese fly to Paris from Beijing, then continue by train to Spain. Once in Spain, these people often end up working in nightclubs, in the clothing trade, in factories, restaurants etc.).

The Greek delegation reported that the cruise ship, to which it had alerted the other delegations under the EU early-warning system, had reached Greece on 5 January 2000; its passengers, however, had not been allowed to disembark, and were obliged to return to the country of departure.

It also referred to the arrival in Naxos of two ships each with 80 persons on board, mostly Kurdish men. 13 Turks were arrested in this connection for the illegal transport of migrants; they were fined and imprisoned. 14 were released.

III. Conclusions

The following developments emerged from the overall picture presented by the Member States, Iceland and Norway for 1999.

- The communities of certain third-country nationals residing in these States provide assistance for the illegal entry and settlement of their compatriots.
- Illegal immigration from Eastern and Central European is increasing; these migrants mostly arrive by land with valid documents and visas.
- There are difficulties in removing the nationals of certain countries.
- Third-country nationals claiming to be originating from risk zones abuse temporary protection regimes.
- There is an increase in the smuggling activities detected, which is a reflection of the efforts made by the authorities in combating this phenomenon.

Special in-depth consideration should be given to the misuse of legal migration procedures for illegal migration purposes (e.g. in order to obtain family reunification or visas, through marriages of convenience etc). This conclusion will be brought to the specific attention of the Visa Working Party.

Note from the Belgian delegation

Subject: Brief description of the situation regarding illegal immigration and facilitation in 1999

2 February 2000

I. Illegal immigrants intercepted on national territory

30.406 aliens were subjected to checks in 1999 (by way of comparison, the corresponding figure for 1998 was 27.347). Administrative expulsion measures were taken against 13.471 persons (11.443 were ordered to leave the country, 824 were subjected to administrative detention with a view to repatriation, 1.103 were repatriated directly and 101 were escorted to the frontier). The rest were allowed to remain in Belgium for various reasons (e.g. persons who were not in possession of documents when intercepted, but whose residence was legitimate, persons involved in suspensive administrative and legal appeals, etc.).

An overview of the main nationalities of those aliens subjected to an expulsion measure is presented below.

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|---|
| 1) | Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: | 2.691 (mostly Kosovars travelling to the United Kingdom, hidden in lorries) |
| 2) | Poland: | 1.087 (illegal employment) |
| 3) | Afghanistan: | 767 (see 1) |
| 4) | Algeria: | 685 (! Many Moroccans claim to be Algerian) |
| 5) | Morocco: | 666 (solely unauthorised residence) |
| 6) | Romania: | 559 (illegal employment, begging, petty crime) |
| 7) | Sri Lanka: | 512 (see 1) |
| 8) | Somalia: | 314 (! persons claiming to have Somali nationality and probably using Belgium as a transit country) |
| 9) | Turkey: | 276 (unauthorised residence, illegal employment, Kurds) |
| 10) | Albania: | 272 (mainly rejected asylum-seekers, prostitution activities) |
| 11) | Ecuador: | 259 (buskers + street traders + transvestites) |
| 12) | China: | 253 (illegal employment + in transit to the United Kingdom, hidden in trailers) |
| 13) | India: | 203 (unauthorised residence + attempts to enter the United Kingdom illegally) |
| 14) | Pakistan: | 145 (solely unauthorised residence + in transit to the United Kingdom) |

Mention should be made of an important phenomenon in connection with this section: the illegal transportation through Belgium of people hidden in lorries and claiming to come from Kosovo, intending to apply for asylum in the United Kingdom. Such people are usually found in the parking areas of motorways heading towards the coastal ports. Most of them make use of the services provided by facilitators, to whom substantial sums of money are paid. Many of the people intercepted in this way are starving and accompanied by children. The situation has overwhelmed reception facilities and placed a considerable strain on the police forces involved.

Before the Kosovo crisis, aliens found concealed in lorries were of various nationalities, including nationals of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Turkey, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. During the Kosovo crisis, virtually all such persons were found to be Kosovars or persons claiming to be Kosovars. Now we are again encountering the various nationalities described above, with the addition of Chinese nationals.

A statistical survey relating to the August - December 1999 crisis period is presented below. Although the problem had been encountered before then, the number of persons intercepted was smaller (at an average of around 250 per month).

	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Afghanistan	34	46	155	138	120	493
Bangladesh		18				18
Bhutan		5			2	7
China		5	13	70	36	124
Ecuador			10	9		19
India		3	1	12	1	17
Iraq			5	10	3	18
Iran		9	1			10
Kosovo	1.420	1.738	1.210	918	602	5.888
Moldavia				4		4
Nepal		2		1	3	6
Ukraine		18				18
Unknown				3	3	6
Pakistan	2	1		8		11
Poland					2	2
Romania		21	3		6	30
Russia		4				4
Slovakia		7				7
Somalia		8				8
Sri Lanka	116	25	71	99	59	470
Turkey	7	39	19	40	20	125
TOTAL	1.579	1.949	1.388	1.312	857	7.085

Chinese immigration accounted for another notable phenomenon. At first sight it appears that this does not relate simply to illegal residence. In 1999 measures were taken against 253 Chinese illegal aliens out of a total of 13.471 (= 1,9%). A substantial number of those aliens were intercepted during checks on illegal convoys travelling to the United Kingdom.

Chinese aliens accounted for 48 applications for asylum (= 0,1%) out of a total of 35.778 persons intercepted.

Alarmingly, we are finding ourselves confronted with an ever-increasing amount of "pseudo-legal immigration" (= the abuse of existing legal procedures). Typical examples include business visas, student status, family reunification and the adoption system.

Repatriations

Total number: 1.802 (1.105 indirect repatriations and 697 direct repatriations), including 650 rejected asylum-seekers. By way of comparison, in 1998 there were 3.042 repatriations (2.027 indirect and 1.015 direct). The drop in numbers seen in 1999 was due to various problems such as the death of a rejected asylum-seeker for whom escorted repatriation had been organised and the resulting witch-hunt, the temporary refusal of airline pilots to carry illegal aliens subject to forcible deportation for fear of incidents, the announcement of the draft Royal Decree (later Law) on the regularisation of illegal aliens (during the period leading up to the entry into force of that Law, caution was exercised in respect of expulsions and detentions), the lack of space available for the administrative detention of illegal aliens with a view to expulsion due to the slower turnover of such detention centres, blamed in turn on difficulties in obtaining documents necessary for the return journey from the foreign authorities, etc.

Direct repatriations relate to aliens in possession of national documents.

The five main countries affected by indirect repatriations were as follows:

- 1) Poland (448)
- 2) Romania (297)
- 3) Ecuador (69)
- 4) Albania (50)
- 5) Bulgaria (41)

II. The pressure of immigration on external borders

Statistics relating to aliens refused entry

Air borders (1)	Land borders (2)	Maritime borders (3)	Total
3.200	1.134	325	4.659

- 1) Airports at Zaventem, Gosselies-Charleroi, Bierset-Liège, Deurne and Ostend.
- 2) Eurostar terminal at Brussel-Zuid station.
- 3) Seaports at Antwerp, Ghent, Zeebrugge and Ostend.

- Top 5 nationalities of aliens refused entry at Zaventem national airport (air border)

- 1) Senegal (159)
- 2) Guinea (114)
- 3) Cameroon (96)
- 4) Nigeria (94)
- 5) China (90)
- 6) Other (2.034)
- Total: (2.587)**

The reasons for refusing entry may be categorised as follows:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1) | no visa | (978) |
| 2) | insufficient means of support | (176) |
| 3) | national alert | (24) |
| 4) | no documents or invalid documents | (73) |
| 5) | false or forged documents | (690) |
| 6) | grounds for travel unclear | (581) |
| 7) | SIS alert | (65) |

Total: (2.587)

The above statistics for Zaventem airport do not include data relating to aliens who applied for asylum there and were expelled on completion of that procedure.

A total of 407 such persons were expelled.

Top 5 nationalities of those persons:

- | | | |
|----|----------------|------|
| 1) | Nigeria | (59) |
| 2) | Congo-Kinshasa | (53) |
| 3) | Sierra Leone | (51) |
| 4) | Cameroon | (20) |
| 5) | Angola | (18) |

- Top 10 nationalities of aliens refused entry at the Eurostar terminal at Brussel-Zuid station (sole land border)

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|-------|
| 1) | Kosovo | (355) |
| 2) | Congo-Kinshasa | (96) |
| 3) | Afghanistan | (39) |
| 4) | Morocco | (34) |
| 5) | Iraq | (29) |
| 6) | Somalia | (23) |
| 7) | Iran | (16) |
| 8) | Nigeria | (15) |
| | Turkey | (15) |
| 9) | Rwanda | (14) |
| | Albania | (14) |
| 10) | Bangladesh | (13) |

No significant conclusions can be drawn with regard to *persons refused entry at maritime borders*. The figure in question is negligible and relates to seamen of various nationalities who are prohibited from entering the country for all kinds of reasons.

III. The asylum procedure

Total figure: **35.778** → inside Belgium: 34.136
 → at border: 1.485
 → in prisons and centres for illegal aliens: 157

by way of comparison with previous years:

1991 :	15.173
1992 :	17.647
1993:	26.882
1994:	14.353
1995:	11.420
1996:	12.433
1997:	11.788
1998:	21.965

This is the highest figure that Belgium has ever seen. The previous record dates from 1993 (another crisis year), when the figure reached 26.882. 1998 was itself a problematic year. The annual average between 1991 and 1999 (excluding 1993, 1998 and 1999) was between around 11.500 and 17.500.

Top 10 nationalities:

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 1) | Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: | 13.067 or 36,5%. |
| | Kosovars (or those claiming to be Kosovars) | accounted for the lion's share: 12.330 or 34,5%. |
| 2) | Romania: | 1.703 (4,8%) |
| 3) | Armenia: | 1.472 (4,1%) |
| 4) | Congo - Kinshasa: | 1.402 (3,9%) |
| 5) | Russian Federation: | 1.376 (3,8%) |
| 6) | Ukraine: | 1.343 (3,8%) |
| 7) | Slovakia: | 1.175 (3,3%) |
| 8) | Albania: | 1.010 (2,8%) |
| 9) | Rwanda: | 1.007 (2,8%) |
| 10) | Bulgaria: | 887 (2,5%) |
| | Georgia: | 887 (2,5%) |

8 of the 10 nationalities concerned thus relate to countries of Central and Eastern Europe, of which 4 relate to the former Soviet Union. A total of 26.680 applications for asylum were made by aliens from Central and Eastern Europe (= 74,1%).

Total monthly figures:

Jan. :	1.956	July :	2.774
Feb. :	1.770	Aug. :	4.347
Mar. :	2.022	Sept. :	4.747
Apr. :	1.886	Oct. :	3.243
May :	2.074	Nov. :	3.322
June :	2.946	Dec. :	4.691

While the monthly average up to and including May 1999 was less than 2.000, the figures showed a particularly sharp increase from June onwards, with extremely high peaks in August, September and December (monthly averages of more than 4.500).

The main problem groups were the Kosovars, Romanians, former Soviets and Slovaks.

- Kosovars

This group included ethnic Albanians from Kosovo as well as those falsely claiming to come from that region (e.g. ethnic Albanians from Albania). In spite of the changed situation in Kosovo, the asylum figures either continued to rise spectacularly or remained high.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
600	533	660	738	981	1.611	1.303	1.539	1.692	1.186	791	696

In 1999 we were clearly encountering a different type of person: those taking advantage of the situation to improperly procure advantages (financial assistance, residence permits, etc.); Kosovars who had previously resided in other Western European countries (D - FR - IT), whether or not under an asylum application procedure, and who had subsequently drifted into Belgium; persons pretending to be Kosovars when in fact they were not. Prior to 1999, most of the people in question were clearly from Kosovo itself, fleeing the atrocities there. At one point the continued high influx of such persons led to a crisis situation as reception facilities were exhausted.

On 3 September 1999 the special status was abolished in respect of Kosovars who arrived in Belgium after that date. However, the status will remain in force until 2 March 2000 or until the end of June 2000 for cases dating back to before 3 September 1999 (according to the category to which they belong).

A total of 5.840 people have benefited from that status (1.221 via the HCR quota, 1.819 relatives of Kosovars on the basis of a visa and 2.800 who combine asylum status with that of displaced persons). Between 700 and 800 people have already returned home under the terms of the return programmes.

- Former Soviets

This new phenomenon has become particularly prevalent since the last few months of 1999. The figures relate to all republics which used to be part of the Soviet Union, except for Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. The Russian Federation and the republics surrounding the Black Sea account for the highest figures. Some categories (in particular Ukrainians) are often in possession of passports and Schengen visas. Presumably such visas are obtained through travel agencies in some cases.

Asylum-seekers from the former Soviet Union in 1999														
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual totals	
Countries													Tot.	%
Armenia	71	80	94	48	54	76	91	200	207	69	163	321	1474	4,12
Azerbaijan	10	16	31	7	12	20	28	38	63	23	24	76	348	0,97
Belarus	15	19	8	15	18	18	16	32	48	30	86	97	402	1,12
Georgia	30	64	79	79	51	67	66	104	72	51	77	148	888	2,48
Kazakhstan	6	7	10	8	5	10	13	34	43	65	111	269	581	1,62
Kyrgyzstan	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	6	7	56	84	214	371	1,04
Moldavia	32	34	39	19	20	21	26	121	95	46	66	79	598	1,67
Uzbekistan	2	3	8	13	5	13	16	33	32	48	88	247	498	1,39
Russia	35	35	38	22	33	70	63	131	194	139	255	340	1355	3,77
Tajikistan	2	2	2	0	1	1	3	1	4	0	8	5	29	0,01
Turkmenistan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	0,01
Ukraine	32	38	39	34	35	67	97	189	239	112	173	287	1342	3,75
Monthly totals	235	299	348	245	235	363	421	890	1005	639	1136	2083	7889	22,05
Percentage per month	12	16,9	17,2	13	11,8	12,3	15,2	20,5	21,2	19,7	34,2	44,4		

In 1999 there were 7.889 asylum-seekers from the former Soviet Union out of a total of 35.784 (= 22,05%).

- Slovaks

This is a section of the population which adapts itself to the measures in force in the various countries of destination. Such aspects as the length of the asylum procedure, the extent to which financial assistance is granted and the effectiveness of the policy on returning rejected applicants play an important role in that respect.

Belgium saw its first influx of Slovak immigrants from September/October 1998 onwards, after the United Kingdom had implemented certain measures. Numbers began to fall in January 1999 following the introduction of an accelerated asylum procedure. In the meantime the Slovaks sought out other destinations (including Finland). When Finland introduced the visa requirement, they returned to Belgium in August and September. The implementation of various deterrent measures (e.g. the provision of solely material assistance rather than financial aid, faster asylum procedures and more efficient expulsion policies) has helped to bring the situation to an end once more.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
66	29	20	13	15	30	51	541	247	46	47	70