



quarterly bulletin of research-based information  
on mission in Europe



A gathering of Jobbik militants in Hungary

## Migration and Nationalism: new challenges for Europe's Christians

**Nationalist and right-wing populist parties are continuing to win votes in regional, national and European elections whilst exploiting popular concern about the presence of immigrants in Europe.**

In the Netherlands, the anti-Islamic *Party for Freedom* (PVV) of Geert Wilders won seats in Almere and the Hague on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March in addition to having three sitting members of the European Parliament. The anti-semitic *Jobbik* in Hungary has 3 MEPs and continues to show strongly in local elections. Italy's *Northern League* (Lega Norda) has over 350 towns, 14 provinces, and has 9 MEPs. It's pre-Christmas 'White Christmas' campaign targeting immigrants was widely condemned. The French National Front (FN) party of Jean-Marie le Pen took more than 20% of the vote in local Elections in March 2010. The xenophobic *British National Party* (BNP) has established itself locally and now claims two MEPs. In Greece, the no less racist *Popular Orthodox Rally* (LAOS) is now surfing the wave of the protest vote with 15 MEPs. Since 2001, the *Danish People's Party* (DF), the *Norwegian Progress Party* (FrP), the *Swedish Democrats* (SD), and the *Swiss Peoples' Party* are an increasingly critical influence in their regional and national politics.

Parties from Central Europe tend to target the presence of historical minorities within their own majority populations and espouse pro-Fascist ideologies from the 1930s whereas western versions target multiculturalism, immigration, and Muslims in particular. Whilst the populist parties play on fears of a multicultural morass, the political Left has been largely silent. The Churches in Europe find themselves caught up in the debate and often struggle to express a clear Kingdom perspective.

### European migration

Facts that sometimes get lost in the statistical storm include the fact that in 2008, 120,000 Dutch people left their densely-populated country, 318,000 Brits left the UK, and in 2009, 165,000 Germans left Germany for other countries, encouraged by a growing number of TV programmes extolling the charms of Australia, New Zealand, the USA, and Spain. The European countries with the highest rates of emigration at present (with highest first) are Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Latvia, and Romania whilst the preferred countries of immigration in 2009 (with most popular first) are Italy, the UK, Spain, France, Sweden, and Belgium. The March 1st 2010 edition of TIME magazine pointed out that

...CONTINUED INSIDE

### EDITORIAL

#### Vista: Seeing Europe with new eyes

We take great pleasure in introducing Vista, a new quarterly bulletin of research-based information on mission in Europe.

Since the beginning of last year the NOVA Research Centre has been sending out a more-or-less monthly email called RBPlus. We have received many positive comments from our subscribers and have decided to make some changes in how we communicate our research findings on mission in Europe.

Some of you asked us to provide a briefer and more immediate flow of information which takes into account the possibilities of social networking. NOVA now has a Facebook page, its own blog "European Mission", and can be followed on Twitter. These together with our website make access to NOVA much more immediate.

Others have encouraged us to engage in a more in-depth analysis of certain issues. From now on RBPlus will become Vista, and each edition will have a feature article dealing with an important topic for mission in Europe today.

This first edition features the issue of migration in Europe. In addition to the lead article we are delighted to inform you that our reports into migrant communities in the UK are now available for purchase. See the back page for more details.

The next issue in July will tackle Islam in Europe and in October we will consider the challenge of secularism.

We would be delighted to get feedback on Vista and encourage you to visit our website and to sign up to our blog, to become a friend of NOVA on Facebook and/or Twitter. Please encourage others to subscribe to our mailing list and feel free to send Vista to your friends and colleagues.

JM



[www.novaresearch.eu](http://www.novaresearch.eu)

marginalising migrants can only perpetuate the social tensions that already exist in some parts of Europe. Practical problems are immense, however, with Spain in 2008 struggling to integrate 5.3 million foreign-born residents into its total population of 46 million.

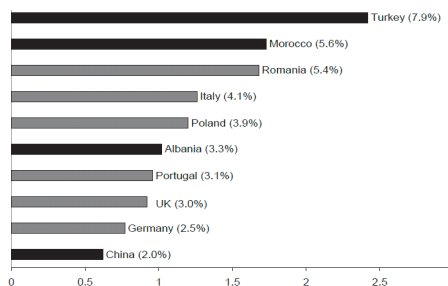
Five European cities are now characterised by hyperdiversity: London, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Hamburg and Munich. These are cities where at least 9.5% of the total population is foreign born, where no one country of origin accounts for 25 percent or more of the immigrant stock, and where immigrants come from all regions of the world. In Europe, 29 cities have a foreign-born population of over 100,000. London, Paris and Moscow have foreign-born populations of over 1 million.

In 2008, Eurostat estimated that 19.47 million non-EU citizens were living among an EU population of just over 500 million; this means that an average of 3.6% of the EU population is foreign-born. However, 56% of the non-nationals living in the EU have European citizenship from another EU member state.

### Churches' responses to migration

Church and mission agency responses have tended to focus on several areas of mission activity: establishing, supporting, and networking with migrant congregations ; promoting social and cultural integration;

Ten most numerous groups of foreign citizens usually resident in EU-27, as a percentage of EU total foreign population in 2008 (Eurostat 2010)



and providing welfare and advocacy services for asylum seekers, refugees and trafficked migrants. More recent attempts are being made to understand migration theologically and to learn from the migrant experience. Many migrants have their own active and important mission movements. For example, the *Chinese Overseas Christian Mission*, based in Milton Keynes, remains the most important Chinese evangelical body in Europe. *Back to Europe* is a coalition of Latin American agencies and individuals working alongside European Christians to 'stimulate a mission and prayer movement to re-engage Europe with the evangelistic mission of the church.' *GATE (Gift of Africans to Europe)* has similar aims.

Stories such as those of smaller Italian towns with *Roman Catholic* immigrant populations of up to 20%, married and with children born in Italy, are not uncommon and allay fears that Europe is fast becoming a Eurabian continent.

European churches and mission agencies are in the vanguard of those working with migrants and 2010 has been declared a year of European churches responding to migration. The experience of *koinonia* outlined in the New Testament will not permit social and ethnic diversity to become divisive and the most powerful testimony to a reconciling Gospel is to live that Gospel out within reconciled communities of the Kingdom. The experience of community should always move us beyond ourselves, however, to the vulnerable, needy and lost who can be found among migrants and refugees. It should also learn how it can best integrate the migrant experiences of vibrant and vital faith with its own experiences.

And, the challenge remains, as to how best address the challenges and questions posed by the nationalist and far-right populist parties. There are precious human rights and freedoms that the church must not allow to be trampled underfoot by such movements. New ways must be found to counter destructive, divisive, and racist policies that ignore the public value of key biblical and theological insights. The diversity of the early church is a powerful reminder and stimulus to better appreciating our own European diversity and framing a more adequate response in mission. DJ

For more migration data see the European Mission Database at [www.novaresaerch.eu](http://www.novaresaerch.eu).

## MIGRATION: A CHALLENGE TO FRENCH CHURCHES

Christians in France have been encouraged by their Council of Christian Churches to "persevere in their solidarity with migrants."

A Lent statement by Co-chairs of the council outlined four ways in which church members could engage:

1. Be well informed in order to overcome preconceived ideas.
2. Show solidarity and brotherhood by supporting or volunteering with organisations that support migrants.
3. Express themselves through engaging with local politicians in order to secure fair treatment for migrants in their area.
4. Change their point of view to identify with those who suffer injustice.

2010 has been designated as the 'European Year of the Churches on Migration' and a recent conference of the Council of Christian Churches in France focused on 'The Churches and the challenge of migration.' JA

## EUROPEAN PREJUDICE

**That migrants, religious groups and minorites suffer prejudice within European Union countries is no surprise, and a recent survey by the Conflict and Violence Research Institute has attempted to quantify the amount.**

Eight thousand people in eight EU countries were interviewed about their attitudes towards these groups. Just over half (50.4%) feel their country has too many immigrants, with 62.4% of Italians and 46% of Dutch having negative attitudes, compared with 27.1% of Poles.

Across all the countries, Islam is the most negatively viewed, with 54% of respondents calling the religion 'intolerant'.

Homosexuality on the other hand is viewed much more negatively in Eastern Europe than in the West. 88% of Poles are against same-sex marriage. In the Netherlands, 83% support gay marriage, and in Germany the figure is 60%.

The survey found that immigrants and homosexuals experience the least prejudice



in the Netherlands. However Professor Andreas Zick, who led the research team, says that while countries such as the Netherlands and France seem to be more tolerant, "if it comes to discrimination intentions like 'would you move into a district where there are many immigrants?' you can see people are more resistant. So there's high diversity...But the social distance is still there." JA

Sources:  
Radio Netherlands Worldwide [www.rnw.nl](http://www.rnw.nl)  
[www.lrytas.lt](http://www.lrytas.lt)  
[islamineurope.blogspot.com](http://islamineurope.blogspot.com)

## LITHUANIANS AND PRAYER

Only 13% of Lithuanians pray on a regular basis, according to a recent survey. This article considers why.

**Following the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Pew Research Center has published research entitled *The Pulse of Europe 2009: 20 years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall*. Themes such as national identity, economy and democracy are covered, along with religion.**

In the United States, 55% of people pray daily; in Poland the figure is 32% and in Italy 30%. However, according to the findings, only 13% of Lithuanians pray daily. This is a higher percentage of the population than Bulgarians, Czechs, East Germans and French, but it still means that about 90% of Lithuanian Catholics do not pray on a daily basis. Why?

### The tradition of prayer

Firstly, there is no tradition of worship or praying together within family life. In Soviet times families could not pray together freely. A new generation has grown up in freedom – but it can take decades for these traditions of

prayer and worship to become part of the daily routine. According to *The Pulse of Europe Survey*, only 8% of young people between 18 and 29 years old take religion seriously.

### Substitutes for 'true food'

The numbers of people praying daily may be low, but Lithuanians are not completely materialistic. There is still a fascination with spirituality, reflected by Oriental spirituality, meditation and yoga centres becoming increasingly popular. People are attracted by the chance of a mystical experience and contact with something intangible. This can be compared with junk food. Continually stuffing yourself with hamburgers won't improve your health, but when you want to get full quickly you don't worry about the lack of vegetables. Likewise in the spiritual context, real spiritual food has been replaced with the junk food equivalent.

### The image of God

It is also worth asking whether people simply don't know about God. If they view God as an impersonal being, they have no need to pray. After all, communicating with an abstract deity or spiritual force or energy can only be fragmentary. Here pastoral and theological questions overlap. How can people's Christian

Habit of Daily Prayer	
	%
USA	55
Poland	32
Italy	30
Spain	27
Germany (West)	25
Britain	16
Lithuania	13
France	13
Bulgaria	9
Germany (East)	9
Czech Republic	6

identity be maintained without including prayer?

The Pew survey showed that "Lithuania is in desperate need of prayer schools". So far, some monasteries teach the art of prayer including Benedictine, Bethlehem sisters, Jesuits and Carmelites. However this is a drop in the ocean, and such schools are needed across the whole of Lithuania. Maybe then prayer will become a daily reality for Lithuanians.

JA

Source: Pew Research Centre

## FINDING FAITH IN GERMANY

Converts to Christianity come from all ages and backgrounds and don't necessarily have a previous association with church

**The IEEG (Institut zur Erforschung von Evangelisation und Gemeindeentwicklung) in Germany has been studying the issue of conversion amongst adults. While mission is a 'safe' topic to talk about, conversion is more controversial and according to the IEEG newsletter, is "rarely talked about in the mainline churches, let alone Practical Theology at most German-speaking universities".**

About 500 people who had recently come to faith in four EKD regions (Mecklenburg, Saxonia, Württemberg and the Rhineland) completed questionnaires about their conversion experience. Staff also spent time exploring the theological concepts surrounding conversion.

The results are currently being presented to the regional churches and others, with publications planned for 2010 and an international symposium on the issue of conversion in early 2011. In the meantime, some initial findings have been published in the IEEG newsletter.

***"a good number of our converts profess that they had grown up in a social environment where church and faith played no role whatsoever."***

The theological reflection has led to the 'Greifswald typology of conversion', which describes three general types of conversion experience.

1. Intensification or growth in confidence  
People who already actively participate in church life, but through conversion experience "a massive increase in joy and confidence in the gospel."
2. Discovery  
Nominal Christians who develop a "deeply personal interest in the gospel and in being part of the community of believers."
3. Fundamental change or break  
People who previously had no connection with church or any faith, and whose conversion leads to a clear break with the past.

Initial findings from the questionnaires include:

1. Conversion is not only happening on the margins. Converts are on average 41 years old and from varied backgrounds.
2. They don't necessarily come from a church background – "a good number of our converts profess that they had grown up in a social environment where church and faith played no role whatsoever."
3. Only 40% of respondents said that Christian support at a time of personal crisis (e.g illness, bereavement, marriage, having a child) played a significant part in their personal faith journey.
4. People play a significant role in bringing others to faith. According to the findings, close friends and relatives are important in bringing people into contact with faith and helping them encounter the Gospel, whereas pastors and church workers play a greater part in bringing people to commitment. "Conversion can thus be understood as a network or team effort, with ordinary Christians and church staff ideally working hand in hand."

JA

Source: IEEG Newsletter English Edition 1.2009



## AN EASTERN EUROPEAN GENERATION GAP

Twenty years after the Berlin Wall came down, a Pew Global Attitudes survey has found that Eastern European Millennials (18-39 year olds who grew up post-1989) are more optimistic about the future of their country than those aged over 40, who tend to be nostalgic about life under communism.

The survey explored attitudes to the changes to democracy and the economy post-communism, including their view of the free market and support for key democratic principles.

When asked about democracy and capitalism, Russia shows the biggest generation gap. While only 53% of Russians supported the move towards a multiparty system, 60% of 18-39 year olds were in favour, compared to 45% of older Russians. An even bigger difference appears with regard to the move away from state-controlled markets, with 62% of 18-30 year olds approving compared to only 40% of older people.

Ukrainians were the least positive about democracy and capitalism – only 30% overall supported moves towards democracy – but even there, the younger age group was more in favour than the older – 37% compared to 26%. With regards to a market economy, only 28% of Ukrainians aged 40+ were in favour, with 47% of 18-39 years olds approving.

More people in Poland and the Czech Republic than in the other countries surveyed felt the economic situation was better post-1989. In Poland 53% of 18-39 year olds, and 42% of older people felt most people were better off – however a similar number of older people (43%) felt



they were worse off. 54% of Czech Millennials felt positive about the economic situation, compared with 39% of older people. 45% of older people felt it was worse.

Czech and Poles were also the most likely to say that ordinary people had benefited from changes post-1989 (53% Czech and 42% of Poles). Again a generation gap is in evidence – with 19% more Czech (64% compared with 45%) and 16% more Poles (51% compared with 35%) aged between 18 and 29 feeling that ordinary people benefit.

In all the countries surveyed, more 18-39 year olds than the older generation wanted freedom to pursue life's goals, than for the state to be in control so that nobody was in need. Czechs and Slovaks of either age are most likely to feel a democratic government is better in solving their

countries problems than a strong leader. (84% 18-39 year olds and 79% 40+ in both countries).

When it comes the state of their democracy however, Bulgarians, Ukrainians and Hungarians are the least happy with only 21% of each saying they are satisfied, compared with 53% of Poles and 50% of Slovaks. The difference between the generations is also the smallest in Bulgaria, Ukraine and Hungary - for example 27% of younger people and 18% of older in Bulgaria and almost equal numbers (21% and 22%) in Hungary are satisfied.

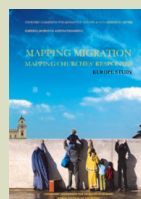
Overall the differences between the generations are smallest when asked about support for key democratic principles, with the most significant gap in Poland. JA  
Source: Pew Research Center

## NOVA Services: General and Commissioned Migration Reports

Why should your ministry have to rely on out of date, unreliable, or deliberately misleading migration data? Nova draws on over six years' experience of European migration research and has established a reputation for accuracy and reliability. Our research clients have included Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe, World Vision, and a coalition including European Christian Mission, the Evangelical Alliance (UK) and Global Connections.

We can provide up to date and reliable research reports focussed on single migrant populations present in Europe. Reports can include historical patterns of migration for that population, migration statistics for host countries, migrant population size and distribution, current trends and future prospects.

UK-based, single migrant population reports cost £150 with each additional migrant



population featured costing a further £100. For large scale projects and for other EU countries we will quote on a project basis according to your specifications.

You can download a FREE Copy of our 2008 report 'Mapping Migration: Mapping Churches Responses-Europe Study' from the resources section of our website at [www.novaresearch.eu](http://www.novaresearch.eu)

Please call us if you would like to purchase or commission migration research reports from us, on 01452 399939 or by email to [djackson@novaresearch.eu](mailto:djackson@novaresearch.eu)



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