

## **THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY MOBILITY IN THE EU: INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND ADOPTION**

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Previous research on immigrant and internationally adopted children in Europe has attempted to include comparative data from different member states or even referred to candidate countries with little success, which has led to a situation in which the use of indicators has typically been restricted to broad indicators of the several issues affecting this population or has had to analyse examples of the problems this lack of harmonisation produces for social research and, in the long run, for public policy itself and the well-being of this children (CHIP Project, 2000; EFFNATIS, 2004, among others). This is even more complicated when addressing the other most common experience of child mobility today, that is, international adoption, an area of research much more depending on data sources and variations from third countries that makes it very difficult to determine similar concerns such as the legal status of children or their ethnicity in the new country, basic for equal opportunity provision within changing household forms and strategies at a transnational level. Moreover, the management of migration flows and integration policies in different states as well as the changing rules and recognition of parental rights and marital status make it more difficult for the use of reliable and comparable indicators across Europe nowadays concerning the children of immigrants and the children adopted internationally.

The chapter will provide an overview of this paradoxes in the data sources available in several European countries and in the European Union (15 for some purposes, 25 for others) and will analyse the *different conceptions of child mobility and belonging into the host/new country* underlying the current systems of classification, information records and uses of indicators concerning immigrant and adopted children 0-17. Finally, we will develop a proposal to build a list of indicators that should be cross-nationally applied in order to design public policies at a European level, to be responsive to different national situations that cannot be identified properly in the present situation. We intend to take the child as the basic unit of observation and analysis, for example, as in crucial indicators such as the *number of foreign-born children living in a household headed by a non-relative by type of relation, rate of foreign-born/classified as minority children placed in special education* or the *number*

*of adopted children in families with biological children, instead of number of households of different types according to internal relations.*

This chapter will have to deal, however, with *two kinds of shortcomings* related to the availability of comparable data to create and use indicators, one concerning the children as a social group differently addressed and visible in the European countries and another specifically linked with the sector of the infant population affected by mobility –migration and international adoption. Whenever possible, we will focus on indicators related to several areas cross-cutting the living conditions of immigrant as well as internationally adopted children such as:

- Demography: definition of units (individuals by birth, individual national status, national status of parents, ethnicity, other) and stocks (groupings)
- Legal status: rights and legal status of children in relation to legal/marital status of adults in charge/in relation to country of origin
- Households and families (types, relations)
- Living conditions of children in relation to adults' homes, occupation and attainment
- Health: prevention (vaccination and medical follow up), treatment (disease linked to migration/adoption stress, imported disease, prevalent disease in countries of origin no longer existing in host/new country)
- Languages and Education (attainment, achievement, linguistic and other cultural rights, financial and academic support)