

The Impact of Intercountry Adoption on the well-being of children in Europe

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Intercountry Adoption in Europe

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Selman P. "Intercountry Adoption in Europe after the Hague Convention" in R. Sykes and P. Alcock (eds) *Developments in European Social Policy : Convergence and Diversity* London: Policy Press, 1998

Content of Paper

- In this paper I review statistics on intercountry adoption for **17** receiving States in Europe and examine sources of children to those countries
- I have used data from **22** receiving States (including 5 non-European States) to estimate the numbers of adoptions in **24** European States of origin.
- Table references in following slides are to separate handout with fuller statistics

The sample for data collection

- The analysis is based on data gathered for the 46 members of the Council of Europe and Belarus, which remains a candidate country. The countries for which data was found have been classified as predominantly receiving States (21) or States of origin (23) – **3 States - Liechtenstein; San Marino and Slovenia** - had no data to indicate involvement in intercountry adoption in 2003 or 2004

The growth of intercountry adoption

- Intercountry adoption has increased dramatically over the past 20 years, from less than 20,000 a year in the mid 1980s to over 45,000 by 2004.
- Between 1998 and 2004 numbers rose by over 40 per cent
- For a more detailed discussion see Selman (1998; 2002; 2005; 2006)

Major Receiving States 1988-2004

1988 (Kane)	1993-7	1998	2004
United States France Italy Sweden Germany Belgium Netherlands Norway Denmark Australia	United States France Italy Canada Sweden Germany Spain Netherlands Norway Denmark	United States France Italy Canada Spain Sweden Germany Netherlands Norway Denmark	United States Spain France Italy Canada Netherlands Sweden Norway Germany Switzerland

The Growth of Intercountry Adoption

	1988 (Kane)	1998	2004	2005
US	9,120	15,774	22,284	22,728
Spain	(93)	1,487	5,541	5,423
France	2,441	3,777	4,079	4,136
Italy	2,078	2,233	3,400	2,840
Canada	(232)	2,222	1,955	1,871
Netherlands	577	825	1,307	1,185
Sweden	1,074	928	1,109	1,109
Norway	566	643	706	582
To 14 States	19,327	30,084	43,848	42,604
To 22 States	N/A	31,924	45,288	43,888

Intercountry Adoption 1998-2004

	2004	2001	1998	% growth
Spain	5,541	3,428	1,487	+273
Ireland	398	179	147	+171
Netherlands	1,307	1,122	825	+58.4
Italy	3,398	1,797	2,233	+52.4
USA	22,884	19,237	15,774	+45.1
Sweden	1,109	1,044	928	+19.5
France	4,079	3,094	3,777	+ 8.0
Canada	1,955	1,874	2,222	-12.0
Denmark	527	631	624	-15.0
Total (22 States)	45,288	36,376	31,924	+ 42%

Standardisation

- In order to make comparisons between countries it is necessary to standardise the **NUMBER** of adoptions in reference to population size or the number of births
- If we do this we find that the **LEVEL** of adoption is higher in Norway and Spain than in the USA which receives a higher number

Adoption Ratios: - per 1,000 births Receiving States: 1989 - 2004

Year> Country v	2004	1998	1989
Norway	12.8	11.2	11.0
Spain	12.4	4.2	---
Sweden	11.7	10.8	9.4
Denmark	8.4	9.9	8.5
USA	5.5	4.2	2.0
UK	0.5	0.4	---

Where do the children come from?

European countries now receive over 40% of all children moving for intercountry adoption and have the highest rate in relation to their population size and number of births. But European countries also send children. The next two slides look at changes in the importance of different countries as States of origin

Intercountry Adoption 1948 - 1967

“Intercountry adoption began primarily as a North American philanthropic response to the devastation of Europe in World War 2”

Altstein & Simon (1991)

In this period European countries were a major source of children adopted in the US and in Northern Europe.

Major Countries of Origin United States 1948 -2005 (Table 6)

1948-62	1967	1982	1991	2005
Korea 22%	Germany 30%	Korea 57%	Romania 28%	China 35%
Greece 16%	Korea 25%	Colombia 9%	Korea 20%	Russia 20%
Japan 13%	Italy 7%	India 7%	Peru 8%	Guatemala 17%
Germany Austria	Japan England	Philippines El Salvador	Colombia India	Korea Ukraine
19,230	1,905	5,749	9,008	22,884

Major Sending Countries: 1980-2003

1980-89	1995	1998	2003
Korea India Colombia Brazil Sri Lanka	China Korea Russia Vietnam Colombia	Russia China Vietnam Korea Colombia	China Russia Guatemala Korea Ukraine
Chile Philippines Guatemala Peru El Salvador	India Brazil Guatemala Romania Philippines	Guatemala India Romania Brazil Ethiopia	Colombia India Haiti Bulgaria Vietnam

Major Sending Countries 2004

USA	France	Spain	Italy
China Russia Guatemala Korea Kazakhstan	Haiti China Russia Ethiopia Vietnam	China Russia Ukraine Colombia Ethiopia	Russia Ukraine Colombia Belarus Brazil
Ukraine India Haiti Ethiopia Colombia	Colombia Madagascar Ukraine Latvia Brazil	India Bolivia Nepal Bulgaria Romania	Poland Ethiopia Romania Bulgaria India

Adoption Ratios in States of Origin

- As with receiving States, if we are to make comparisons between States of origin, it is necessary to relate the NUMBER of adoptions the number of births or under 5 population.
- If we do this we find that in 2003 the adoption RATE or RATIO was higher in Bulgaria or Belarus than in China which sent the most children for intercountry adoption

Adoption Ratios in States of Origin 2003 and 2004

Country	Adoptions 2003	Ratio 2003	Ratio 2004
Bulgaria	962	15.5	6.3
Belarus	636	7.2	7.1
Guatemala	2,677	6.4	8.2
Russia	7,746	6.3	7.7
Ukraine	2,052	5.0	5.0
Haiti	1,055	4.2	4.6
Korea	2,308	4.1	4.0
Romania	471	2.0	1.2
China	11,230	0.6	0.8
Ethiopia	854	0.3	0.5
India	1,172	0.05	0.04

Receiving States and States of Origin in Europe (Table 1)

In 2005 The Hague Special Commission wrote to all members asking for a report on their involvement in intercountry adoption and whether this was primarily as a receiving State or as a State of origin (i.e. a country sending rather than receiving children). **28** European states responded – **16** said Receiving state; **10** said state of Origin and **2** (Portugal and Czech Republic) said “both”

21 European receiving States

Andorra ¹	Germany ¹	<i>Monaco</i> ¹
Austria ¹	Greece	Netherlands ¹
Belgium	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Norway</i> ¹
Cyprus ¹	Ireland ²	Spain ¹
Denmark ¹	Italy ¹	Sweden ¹
Finland ¹	Luxembourg ¹	<i>Switzerland</i> ¹
France ¹	Malta ¹	United Kingdom ^{1a}
¹ self-categorisation in response to Hague questionnaire	<i>Non-EU members italics</i> All are members of Council of Europe	^{1a} Scotland only reply ² Ireland has signed but not ratified Hague

21 European States of Origin

Albania	Estonia ¹	Poland ¹
Armenia ²	Georgia	Romania ¹
Azerbaijan	Hungary ¹	Russia ²
Belarus	Latvia ¹	Serbia ^{1,2}
Bosnia ²	Lithuania ¹	Slovakia ¹
Bulgaria	Macedonia ²	Turkey ¹
Croatia ²	Moldova ^{1,2}	Ukraine ²
¹ self-categorisation in response to Hague questionnaire	EU members in bold All but Belarus members of Council of Europe	² States not ratifying Hague Convention

Other European States

- **Czech Republic and Portugal** said they were both a receiving State and a State of origin. They have been classed as primarily State of origin as available data indicates more are sent.
- No data indicating any ICA in **Liechtenstein, Slovenia** or **San Marino** – but last two have ratified Hague Convention. Vatican City was also excluded from analysis

ICA and the EU

- Much publicity has surrounded the pressures on **Romania** (and Bulgaria) to reduce or end ICA as a condition of entry into the EU in January 2007. However little was said about the role of EU countries as major receivers of children (18,000+ in 2004) – and even less about 6 existing member States who sent significant numbers of children for ICA in 2003 and 2004 and continue to do so.

Movement of children within Europe

A major aim of this paper is to examine the movement of children within Europe. The next two slides look at:

- The major European receiving States and the proportion of the children received who came from other European countries
- European countries sending most children – and the proportion sent to other European countries

Top 6 European receiving States 2004 (Tables 2 & 3)

Country	Number of ICA	Ratio per 100 Live births	Proportion from Europe
Spain	5,541	12.4	38%
France	4,079	5.5	21%
Italy	3,403	6.4	64%
Netherlands	1,307	6.9	2%
Sweden	1,109	11.7	16%
Norway	706	12.8	4%

Top European States of Origin 2004 (Tables 2 & 3)

Country	Number of ICA	Ratio per 100 Live births	Proportion to Europe
Russia	9,440	7.7	36%
Ukraine	2,045	5.0	60%
Belarus	627	7.1	58%
Poland	408	1.1	74%
Bulgaria	393	6.3	69%
Romania	289	1.2	78%

Other European States of Origin

Country	Number of ICA	Ratio per 100 Live births	Proportion to Europe
Latvia	127	6.0	86%
Lithuania	103	3.3	72%
<i>Europe/Asia</i>			(43% - all)
Armenia	57	1.7	28%
Georgia	32	0.6	6%
Azerbaijan	30	0.2	7%

Social and Demographic Indicators for sending and receiving States 2004 (Table 4)

Top 6	GNI	TFR	Top 6	GNI	TFR
Spain	21,210	1.3	Russia	3,410	1.3
France	30,090	1.9	Ukraine	1,260	1.1
Italy	26,120	1.3	Belarus	2,120	1.2
N'lands	31,700	1.7	Poland	6,090	1.2
Sweden	35,770	1.7	Bulgaria	2,740	1.2
Norway	52,030	1.8	Romania	2,920	1.3

Orphan visas in US 1996-2006 Peak Year highlighted

Country	1996	2002	2004	2006
Russia	2,454	4,939	5,865	3,706
Ukraine	<50	1,106	723	460
Belarus	<50	169	202	0
Bulgaria	163	260	110	28
Poland	64	101	102	67
Romania	2,954 (1991)	168	57	0
Lithuania	78	21	29	14
Latvia	82	33	15	24

Adoptions to Italy 1999-2005 Peak Year highlighted

Country	1999	2002	2004	2006
Russia	704	380	739	700
Ukraine	116	634	655	202
Belarus	0	185	226	34
Poland	62	154	194	228
Romania	243	40	119	0
Bulgaria	157	219	113	28
Lithuania	0	5	34	69
Latvia	0	0	0	36

EURADOPT Adoptions 1996-2005 Peak Year highlighted

Country	1996	2001	2003	2005
Russia	91	73	191	111
Belarus	13	65	71	0
Poland	61	59	47	63
Ukraine	0	27	37	30
Bulgaria	31	39	34	10
Romania	260	35	10	3
Lithuania	6	0	5	13
Latvia	17	9	2	0

Profiles of States of Origin

- For the past 10 years China has dominated intercountry adoption as the major source of children in the USA and worldwide
- More recently Ethiopia has emerged as a new major source - while adoptions from Eastern Europe have declined in number
- The next two tables explore patterns over the period 1998 to 2004

CHINA 1998-2005

Country V	1998	2002	2003	2004	2005
US	4,206	5,053	6,859	7,044	7,906
Spain	196	1,427	1,043	2,389	2,753
Canada	901	771	1,108	1,001	973
NL	210	510	566	800	666
Sweden	123	316	373	497	462
TOTAL	6,115	9,135	11,203	13,408	14,357

ETHIOPIA 2001-2006

	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006
France	234	217	390	397	408
USA	158	135	289	441	732
Spain	0	107	220	227	N/A
Italy	79	47	192	211	227
NL	25	39	72	59	35
TOTAL	728	855	1,509	1,650	(1,615)

The Impact of Intercountry Adoption

- **Children adopted from outside Europe**
- **Children adopted from Europe to North America**
- **Children moving between European States**
- **The impact of ICA on services for children in European States of origin**
- **The impact of ICA on services for children in European receiving States**

Children adopted from outside Europe

In her review of the results of key international adoption research projects in Scandinavia, **Monica Dalen (1998)** concludes that **“around 75 per cent manage well, without any sign of major problems”**, but that the remaining 25-30 per cent have **“problems linked to language, learning, identity and ethnicity”**

Hjern et al (2002)

- Recent research on intercountry adoption in Sweden has indicated major problems in young adults adopted from overseas with an odds ratio of 5.0 for suicide compared to ethnic Swedes and higher likelihood of drug and alcohol abuse and needing psychiatric care
- Hubinette (2006) argues that adult Swedish adoptees suffer many other problems and disadvantages – with higher unemployment; lower income; and lower marriage rates; and fewer children.

Children moving between European States

Follow-up of children adopted from Romania to the UK (Rutter 2000) shows a remarkable “catch-up” by institutionalised children, but also pervasive problems (attachment, inattention/overactivity, quasi-autistic features and cognitive impairment) associated with institutional privation, in a minority – 35 % of those adopted at age 6 or older had such problems, compared to 10 % of UK adoptees.

Children adopted from Europe to North America

- Most studies of Romanian children show good progress – outcomes comparable to those for children adopted in Europe (Haugaard 2000).
- But there seem to be emerging problems with some children adopted from Russia to the US – *“at least 14 adopted Russian children have been killed abroad in recent years, according to Russian officials”* (BBC News 12/07/2005)

The impact of ICA on services for children in European States of origin

- Dickens (2002; 2006) has argued that intercountry adoption has hindered the development of child care services, including in-country adoption, in Romania and that ending it is necessary if those problems are to be resolved.
- Sarri et al (1998) have made a similar point about the impact of continuing intercountry adoption from Korea.

The impact of ICA on services for children in European receiving States

- The UK is unique among EU countries in its use of adoption as the preferred solution for the problems of looked after children. In 2004 3,700 (6%) were adopted from the care system in comparison with 300 intercountry adoptions.
- Has a focus on ICA inhibited the development of permanency planning in other countries to the detriment of children with special needs?

Hjern et al (2004)

- **Foster children and adolescents receiving other kinds of child welfare interventions had higher rates of suicide and other avoidable deaths than the general population: 4.3 x and 2.7 x respectively.**
- **Children in substitute care in early childhood were at particular risk for suicide death in adolescence and young adulthood. Child welfare interventions failed to prevent excess deaths in children at risk**

Unresolved Issues

- **What are the implications of the reduction in level of adoptions from Romania and Bulgaria on the well-being of children in those countries?**
- **Why is there no concern over rising numbers of children adopted from other EU countries such as Poland, Latvia and Lithuania?**
- **Are there advantages in children moving shorter distances for intercountry adoption – e.g. within Europe – or between South and North America?**

**Rene Hoksbergen (1991)
expressed the hope that:**

“culture and economic circumstances in all Third-World countries change to the extent that it will be the exception when a child’s only chance for a satisfactory upbringing exists with a family thousands of miles from its birthplace”.

Is Eastern Europe the new Third World?