



## **Immigration Detention in Ireland**

**Global Detention Project**

**January 2014**

The Global Detention Project (GDP) is a research initiative that tracks the use of detention in response to global migration. Based at the Graduate Global Migration Centre in Geneva, Switzerland, the GDP's aims include: (1) providing researchers, advocates, and journalists with a measurable and regularly updated baseline for analysing the growth and evolution of detention practices and policies; (2) encouraging scholarship in this field of immigration studies; and (3) facilitating accountability and transparency in the treatment of detainees.

"Immigration Detention in Ireland"  
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## Introduction

Migratory patterns to and from Ireland have changed significantly in recent years, reflecting the country's evolving economic fortunes. In the 1990s, Ireland's economic boom spurred a surge in migration to the country, and the traditionally emigrant country became a net immigration one. The country also experienced rapid growth in the number of asylum seekers during this period, increasing from 362 in 1994 to a peak of 11,634 in 2002 (DoJ 2008).

More recently, however, Ireland's economic woes have led a growing number of people to leave the country. By 2012, the annual number of emigrants had increased 240 percent from a low of 26,000 in 2002 (Gilmartin 2012). According to one estimate, by 2015, the annual number could reach "200,000 people, in a country of 4.5 million ... if employment prospects do not improve" (McKittrick 2010).

Those departing the country have included thousands of Eastern Europeans as well as significant numbers of young Irish citizens. As one observer noted: "Some of those leaving are thought to be immigrants who arrived in large numbers from mainland Europe over the last decade and who, now jobless, are returning home. But a large proportion are young Irish males who, with unemployment running at more than 13 percent, see little prospect of obtaining work. ... The return of high levels of emigration is one of many negative factors in a country which sees itself as among those hardest hit by the recession" (McKittrick 2010)

Despite concerns about "brain drain" and other negative consequences of Ireland re-assuming its role as a net emigrant state—which it had by 2010—the country has appeared to aggressively pursue removal efforts. Thus, while the number of asylum applications has fallen steadily since 2002 (shrinking from 10,938 in 2000 to 1,250 in 2011), the number of people ordered to leave the country has steadily increased. In 2008, 1,285 people were issued return orders; by 2012, that number had increased to 2,065 (Eurostat).

Ireland's deportation practices have been the subject of important judicial decisions at the European level. In a 2011 ruling, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU 2011) jointly addressed two separate cases (*N.S.* and *M.E.*) regarding the deportations of asylum seekers from Ireland and the United Kingdom to Greece under the Dublin II regulation. The court held that EU law precludes a conclusive presumption that any Member State observes EU fundamental rights, and that it is thus incumbent on states to determine whether an asylum seeker's rights will be safeguarded in the receiving country. Thus, according to the court, if Greece's much-maligned asylum and detention practices do not meet basic standards, Ireland and the United Kingdom could not deport people to that country.

Ireland's provisions for asylum seekers have also come under considerable scrutiny. In its 2011 submission to the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Period Review, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) remarked that despite a diminishing number of people seeking asylum in the country, Ireland's refugee recognition rate was

unusually low. According to the report, “In 2010, the total number of new applications for refugee status amounted to 1,939, which is a significant reduction compared to previous years. The authorities recognized 160 asylum-seekers as refugees and granted subsidiary protection status to two persons in 2010. The recognition rate is particularly low, when compared to other EU member States” (UNHCR 2011).

More recently, in August 2013, the High Court of Northern Ireland ruled that UK immigration authorities could not return a Sudanese family to the Republic of Ireland under Dublin II because the conditions of republic’s “Direct Provision” asylum accommodation system were insufficient to guarantee the best interest of the children. Commenting on the case, the head of the [Irish Refugee Council](#) (IRC) stated: “This decision is a sad, but accurate, reflection of a system that is failing to protect the best interests of children. The reality is that asylum seekers can live independent lives in Northern Ireland, while just a few miles over the border they are forced to live in a state of institutionalised poverty. Direct Provision simply is not suitable for families and vulnerable people” (IRC 2013).

Although the country detains only a small number of people each year compared to other EU members, its immigration detention regime has repeatedly been the subject of criticism. According to the Irish Prison Service, only 385 people were detained in 2012, and 395 in 2011. During this period, the average daily number of migrant detainees was eight (IPS 2012).

Rights watchdogs have repeatedly censured Ireland for its use of prisons for immigration purposes. Its use of prisons places Ireland amongst an increasingly small group of countries in the EU/Schengen Zone that use prisons, including notably Germany and [Switzerland](#).

By the end of 2013 Ireland had yet to establish a specially designed detention facility, even though the Council of Europe’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) as well as other rights bodies had repeatedly pressured it to do so. Somewhat surprisingly, in its 2011 report on a visit to Ireland, the CPT neglected to follow up on its previous advice regarding appropriate places of detention, failing to mention the issue at all. However, the committee highlighted numerous shortcomings in several prisons which, because they can be used for immigration purposes, are potentially relevant to detained migrants and asylum seekers. In particular, the CPT highlighted the high levels of violence between inmates in some facilities; problems with the provision of healthcare at Cork, Midlands, and Mountjoy Prisons; overcrowding and poor living conditions in the prison system; and problems related to complaints procedures and contacts with the outside world (CPT 2011).

## **Detention Policy**

Ireland's principal immigration norms are provided in the Aliens Act 1946, the Immigration Act 1999, the Illegal Immigrants (Trafficking) Act 2000, the Immigration Act 2003, and the Immigration Act 2004, as well as subsequent amendments and regulations.

A new Immigration, Residence, and Protection Bill is intended to replace all previous legislation on immigration. However, as of early 2014, it had yet to be adopted. The legislation is meant to establish a more unified immigration code, with its primary focus the improvement of efficiency and transparency within the system. The legislation also aims to facilitate the speed of asylum procedures, and has been applauded by many observers (INIS 2008; UNHCR-Ireland 2009; Arnold 2009).

According to one government minister, the proposed law is not intended to “allow the detention of asylum seekers” and “detention could only be introduced on foot of a government decision and primary legislation.” However, the final version of the bill could expand the authority to detain at points of entry and authorize the detention of asylum seekers until they can be issued with a resident permit (IRC 2008, p. 4).

A coalition of non-governmental organizations has actively lobbied against a provision in the legislation providing summary deportation and has advocated for the inclusion of a “truly independent appeals mechanism for immigration and protection decisions” (Joyce 2011). In a joint statement on the 2010 version of the bill, the NGO coalition stated: “The IRP Bill 2010 would allow someone who is in the State without permission to be removed without notice. In contrast, the current system provides an individual 15 working days to make representations to the Minister setting out why he/she should be allowed to remain in the State. Those reasons can include situations such as threats of violence, trafficking, exploitation, family and medical grounds and other humanitarian considerations. The new Bill would take away this basic provision and create the conditions under which vulnerable migrants and those in need of protection may be removed without having had access to justice and fair procedures. The 15-day provision needs to be retained” (NGO Coalition 2011).

**Detaining authorities.** Police (Garda Síochána) and immigration officers are both legally authorised to arrest people suspected of immigration violations. The Minister for Justice, Equality, and Law Reform can also authorize medical inspectors to detain and examine suspected non-citizens arriving at or leaving the country (Immigration Act 2004, Section 3.3).

**Authorized places of detention.** Detainees are often kept for a brief initial period of time at a Garda Síochána (police) station before being either returned to the carrier on which they arrived, or transferred to one of the prisons specified in immigration regulations for immigration uses (Kelly 2005, p. 20; Immigration Act 2003 “Removal Places of Detention”; Regulations 2005). Non-citizens who are refused entry must “as soon as practicable” be brought before a District Court judge to determine whether the person should be kept in detention.

**Grounds for Detention.** Irish law provides various grounds for the detention of both asylum seekers and unauthorized migrants. A 2012 report by the European Migration Network summarizes: “Under certain specific circumstances Irish law permits the detention of: asylum applicants; persons refused leave to land; persons in respect of whom a deportation order has been issued; and persons who are to be transferred under the Dublin Regulation” (Quinn and Kingston 2012).

The Immigration Act 2003 (Section 5.2) provides that an immigration officer or Garda Síochána can detain anyone age 18 or over who has been refused to enter the country or who is suspected of being “unlawfully in the State for a continuous period of less than 3 months.” According to official government sources, “In practice, persons refused leave to land are held for very short periods (in most cases overnight). There is a requirement in law to remove such persons as soon as practicable” (Government of Ireland 2013).

Irish law also provides grounds for detention related to removal proceedings. Section 3.1 of the Immigration Act 1999 provides for removal and indefinite exclusion, as well as detention in order to carry out a removal order. According to Section 5.1 of the 1999 law, “Where an immigration officer or a member of the Garda Síochána, with reasonable cause, suspects that a person against whom a deportation order is in force has failed to comply with any provision of the order or with a requirement in a notice under section 3(3)(b)(ii), he or she may arrest him or her without warrant and detain him or her in a prescribed place.”

Section 5.1 of the 1999 Act further specifies that authorities can arrest and detain without warrant a person who has been issued a removal order and has (1) failed to comply with any provision of the order; (2) can reasonably be suspected of trying to leave the country and enter another without legal authorization; (3) has destroyed identity documents or is in possession of false documents; (4) or intends to avoid removal.

“A concluded intention to deport is required in order to detain for the purpose of deportation; as soon as the intention to deport ceases the individual cannot generally be detained. It must also be evident that the deportation can actually be effected within the eight-week period” (Quinn and Kingston 2012).

**Asylum seekers.** Asylum seekers are generally not detained in Ireland. However, the 1996 Refugee Act authorizes the Garda Síochána to detain an asylum seeker if there is reasonable cause to suspect that the person: poses a threat to national security or public order; has committed a serious non-political crime; has not made reasonable efforts to establish his or her true identity; intends to avoid removal from Ireland in the event of his or her application for asylum being transferred to a convention country; intends to enter another state without lawful authority; or, without reasonable cause, has destroyed his or her identity or travel documents or is in possession of forged identity documents.

Additionally, “Persons who receive a Dublin Regulation Transfer Order may be detained pending removal although [Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS)] stated that this is not common practice. The legal basis for detention pending Dublin II transfer is Section 22 of the Refugee Act, 1996 as amended, and Section 7(5) of S.I. 423 of 2003” (Quinn and Kingston 2012).

As is common in many countries that detain asylum seekers, Ireland does not provide desegregated statistics specifying the numbers of asylum seekers placed in detention. In 2013, responding to a freedom of information request sent as part of a joint Global Detention Project – Access Info [study](#), a government Freedom of Information Officer wrote that “The Irish Prison Service does not keep statistics on the specific immigration or residency status of prisoners so it is unable to provide details of ‘the total number of asylum-seekers who were placed in detention’ during the above years. This part of the request is accordingly refused under Section 10(1)(a) As the records do not exist” (Brennan 2013).

Citing statistics provided by the [Office of Refugee Applications Commissioner](#) (ORAC) the [Asylum Information Database](#) (AIDA) reported that “50 [asylum applications] – 5.2% of all applications – were received from persons in places of detention in 2012, less than 15% of these were interviewed in a place of detention under section 11 of the Refugee Act, 1996, as the majority of cases were finalised in ORAC, i.e. the applicant was released before the substantive interview required by section 11” (AIDA 2013).

While agencies like UNHCR have lauded Ireland for not emphasizing the detention of asylum seekers (UNHCR 2011), the government’s “direct provision” system for asylum seekers has been heavily criticized. Under this system, when asylum seekers arrive in the country, they are placed in one of the country’s 46 non-secure facilities, or “hostels,” operated by the Reception and Integration Agency, which is a unit of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service. During their stay, which can last several months, asylum seekers are not allowed to work; instead, the Irish government directly provides for their basic needs, which according to one report “means bed and board in hostels and a weekly payment of €19.10 per adult and €9.60 per child” (Thornton 2013a).

Asylum seekers and rights advocates have repeatedly pointed to deficiencies in the direct provision system, particularly with respect to the treatment of children. These issues were highlighted in a high profile court case in the United Kingdom when a family of Sudanese asylum seekers fled to Northern Ireland after their asylum cases were rejected in Ireland. When the UK Border Agency sought to deport the family back to Ireland under the Dublin II regulation, they mounted a legal challenge to their deportation, arguing that Ireland’s refugee and protection status determination system, and in particular its very low refugee recognition rate and its direct provision system, would violate their rights under the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The High Court of Northern Ireland issued a judgement on the case in August 2013, ruling on behalf of the Sudanese family on the grounds that if they were returned to Ireland, the best interests of the children could not be ensured. Among the issues noted by the judge in the case were that: (1) the asylum applicants would not be allowed to



work in the Republic of Ireland while they could possibly work in Northern Ireland; (2) the family would be obliged to stay at a communal direct provision facility in the Republic, while in Northern Ireland they could have their own accommodation and prepare their own meals; (3) in Northern Ireland, the children would have the opportunity to “develop their own sense of belonging and separate identity,” which would not be possible in the republic’s direct provision centres; (4) the long period of time asylum seekers are forced to remain in direct provision could result in physical and mental health issues; and (5) while in the UK, children would, as a matter of policy, not be sent back to Sudan, this would not automatically be the case in Ireland. (For a review of the case, see Thornton 2013b.)

The number of asylum applications in Ireland has fallen over the past decade, shrinking from 10,938 in 2000 to 1,250 in 2011. Simultaneously, the number of deportation orders issued has risen, from 187 to 280 during the same eleven-year period (DoJ 2012).

Ireland is notable for its very low refugee recognition rate, which is the lowest in Europe. It has a 1.5 percent acceptance at first instance and 6 percent on appeal. The European Union has an overall rate of 27 percent (Anti Deportation Ireland, 2012).

The low acceptance rate in Ireland has led many observers to question whether there is a “culture of disbelief” amongst authorities in the country (Irish Refugee Council 2012).

**Length of detention.** There are differing provisions in Irish law regarding lengths of detention for asylum seekers and people who are refused entry into the country or are considered not to be legally residing there.

Asylum seekers can be detained under orders of a District Judge for consecutive 21-day “committals,” until their application has been decided. There is no limit to the number of committals, which means asylum seekers can potentially be detained indefinitely (Refugee Act 1996, as amended by the 2003 Immigration Act).

Unauthorized non-nationals are to be detained for a period not exceeding 56 days. However, if they contest removal orders or appeal decisions on their initial challenges, the period of time during which those legal processes are on-going are not counted as part of the eight-week detention limit (Immigration Act 2003, Section 5.2).

Immigration detainees can also be held at Garda Síochána stations for a period not exceeding 48 hours, or two consecutive overnight stays.

Ireland, along with the [United Kingdom](#), opted out of the EU Returns Directive, which among other things imposes limits on the length of time a country can confine a person in administrative immigration detention.

According to JRS-Europe’s 2010 report on Ireland, most immigration detainees do not remain in detention for longer than three days. During the period 2003-2007, 3,109 people were detained for no more than three days; 1,119 for 4-7 days; 477 for 8-14

days; 410 for 15-30 days; 233 for 31-50 days; and 568 for more than 50 days (JRS 2010).

**Minors.** Irish law does not provide for the detention of accompanied and unaccompanied minors. However, concerns have been raised by in the past about the possibility of minors being placed in detention because of deficiencies in the process of determining a person's age. In 2008, the UN Human Rights Committee noted in its report on Ireland that "an immigration officer's assessment that a person is not under 18 years of age could lead to the detention of that person and that such assessments are not verified by social services" and advised Ireland to "ensure that the principle of the best interests of the child is given due consideration in all decisions concerning unaccompanied and separated children and that social services, such as the Health Service Executive, are involved in the age assessment of asylum-seekers by immigration officials" (HRC 2008).

**Non-custodial measures.** Irish law does not make direct reference to detention alternatives. However, if foreign nationals appealing deportation orders comply with certain conditions—including remaining in a specified district or location, reporting to a Garda Síochána station, handing over travel documents, and/or providing a bond or guarantee from a third party—authorities can opt not to detain them (Immigration Act, Section 5:4).

**Criminalisation.** Ireland has provided criminal penalties for violations of immigration laws as far back as the Aliens Act of 1935. These penalties were amended in the Immigration Act of 1999. According to Article 9 of the Immigration Act, "A person guilty of an offence under this Act shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1,500 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to both." Offense listed in the act include obstructing deportation proceedings and documentation fraud.

## Detention Infrastructure

Ireland does not have a dedicated immigration facility. Rather, non-citizens subject to administrative detention can be confined briefly at police stations before being transferred to a select group of prisons, which are operated by the Irish Prison Service. There are nine prisons authorized for this type of detention in the Immigration Act 2003 (Removal Places of Detention) Regulations 2005. However, according to the Irish Department of Justice and Equality, as of 2013, only seven prisons were in use for immigration-related reasons: Castlerea Prison, Cloverhill Prison, Cork Prison, Limerick Prison, Mountjoy Prison, Dochas (Mountjoy Women's Prison), and Wheatfield Prison (Brennan 2013).

Prison facilities used in the past have included Saint Patrick's Institution and the Training Unit in Glengariff Parade (GDP 2010). Additionally, Ireland at one time reportedly used the Arbour Hill prison in Dublin to hold people on immigration violations despite the fact that it was not designated in the Immigration Act 2003 for this purpose (Irish Prison Service 2007).

The Global Detention Project coded one facility previously used for immigration detention, the Training Unit, as a semi-secure detention site because it provided a minimal-security environment that allowed for temporary release of detainees. The Irish Prison Service described the facility as a "semi-open, low security prison for males aged 18 years and over, with a strong emphasis on work and training" (Irish Prison Service, "Training Unit"). According to a 1975 statute on temporary release at the Training Unit, the facility governor or officer in charge can "release temporarily for a specified period persons detained therein" when certain conditions are met, including that: "(a) the person shall keep the peace and be of good behaviour during the period of release, (b) the person shall be of sober habits, (c) the person shall not communicate with, or publish or cause to be published any matter by means of, newspapers, or any other publishing medium or engage in public controversy" (S.I. No. 250/1975).

Immigration detainees are generally held in centres for remand prisoners, rather than convicted prisoners. Two of the most important facilities used for immigration purposes reportedly are Cloverhill Prison (for men) or the Dóchas Centre at Mountjoy Prison (for women) (O'Riordan 2007).

**Criticism and penal reform.** Observers have long criticized Ireland's practice of confining immigration detainees in prisons and the conditions of confinement. For instance, in 2010, a [Jesuit Refugee Service](#) study found that female immigration detainees held at the Dóchas Centre prison "report having racist insults hurled at them from Irish criminal offenders that are detained within the same space." Additionally, the report found that a quarter of the detainees interviewed for its study reported having experienced "one or more incidents in which they were verbally insulted or mocked by someone else in the detention centre. Among these, 48 percent blame the security staff and 44 percent blame co-detainees. Forty percent say that these experiences are frequent, while 26 percent say that such incidents occur on an occasional basis" (JRS-Europe 2010).

The Council of Europe's Committee on the Prevention of Torture (CPT), in its report on a 2006 visit to Ireland, noted: "[A] prison is by definition not a suitable place in which to detain someone who is neither suspected nor convicted of a criminal offence. In those cases where it is deemed necessary to deprive persons of their liberty for an extended period under aliens legislation, they should be accommodated in centres specifically designed for that purpose, offering material conditions and a regime appropriate to their legal situation and staffed by suitably qualified personnel. The CPT's delegation was able to observe for itself the difficulties that a prison, such as Limerick, faced when having to accommodate foreigners in a carceral environment. For example, it met a man from Liberia who had been brought from Shannon airport to Limerick prison on a Friday night and by Tuesday morning he had already attempted to commit suicide twice and was being kept naked in a special observation cell, with only a blanket to cover him. Prison managers and officers, in the various establishments visited by the delegation, all agreed that they were not appropriately equipped or trained to look after immigration detainees. The Committee calls upon the Irish authorities to review urgently the current arrangements for accommodating persons detained for immigration offences" (CPT 2007).

The Irish government responded: "The Irish authorities would point to the fact that detention associated with immigration related matters is used to the least extent possible and generally speaking such persons are held in detention for a relatively short period of time when the need does arise. Therefore, the number of deportees detained at any particular time pending removal from the State is low. The Irish authorities would again point out that persons held on immigration related matters, including those with deportation orders are, unless the subject of a conviction, in general kept apart from convicted persons while in detention. The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) is in ongoing discussions with the Irish Prison Service in relation to detention facilities for immigration offenders at the proposed new prison at Thornton Hall with the aim of providing a separate purpose built facility for immigration offenders at the new complex that conforms to best international standards. The number of persons detained on immigration related matters outside of the greater Dublin area is small and they will, where practicable, continue to be detained for the shortest possible period" (Government of Ireland 2007).

In its 2011 report on a follow up visit to Ireland, the CPT neglected to pursue its previous advice regarding appropriate places of detention, failing to mention the issue at all. However, the committee highlighted numerous shortcomings in several prisons which, because they can be used for immigration purposes, are potentially relevant to detained migrants and asylum seekers. In particular, the CPT highlighted the high levels of violence between inmates in some facilities; problems with the provision of healthcare at Cork, Midlands, and Mountjoy Prisons; overcrowding and poor living conditions in the prison system; and problems related to complaints procedures and contacts with the outside world (CPT 2011).

In 2008, the UN Human Rights Committee also noted Ireland's inappropriate detention infrastructure. Its report stated: "The State party should review its detention policy with

regard to asylum-seekers and give priority to alternative forms of accommodation. The State party should take immediate and effective measures to ensure that all persons detained for immigration related reasons are held in facilities specifically designed for this purpose” (HCR 2008).

Previously, in 2004, research undertaken by the Irish Refugee Council, the Immigrant Council of Ireland, and Irish Penal Reform Trust found that accommodation in prisons with people suspected of and/or sentenced for having committed criminal offences can be extremely traumatic for immigration detainees. Their report stated that immigration detainees in Ireland are a “particularly disadvantaged group—away from the public eye they may not have access to services which have been made available for immigrants, they may not be made aware of their rights and entitlements or may not be able to exercise them because of language and/or literacy difficulties” (Kelly 2005). The report further highlighted problems experienced due to cultural difference, compounded by a lack of access to legal aid.

Despite past claims by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service that it was pursuing the creation of a purpose built facility, as of 2013 little progress appeared to have been made in establishing this centre. The lack of progress appears to be at least in part related to the decision to put on hold plans for building a “super” prison at Thornton Hall that would have included dedicated immigration facilities.

According to a report by the Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT), the Thornton Hall “super prison” project was originally conceived as a way to alleviate severe overcrowding in Irish prisons. However, as of 2013, the project had been shelved, if not altogether abandoned, in favour of other, more modest modifications to Ireland’s prison system (IPRT 2013). IPRT credits itself for having helped bring about “an enormous sea-change in penal policy.” Describing its advocacy in a 2013 case study on the Thornton project, the IPRT states, “IPRT was strenuously opposed to the super-prison plans from their inception, drawing on national and international experience which shows that penal expansion does not address overcrowding, and only serves to increase prison populations: if prison places are built, over time ways are found to fill them. ... We did our research. We set out our position. We took a detailed look at the short-, medium- and long-term issues, and worked out the most effective ways to address them. We fought assumptions with facts and analysis. We abolished established myths that soaring crime was responsible for rocketing prison numbers. We decided that the economic crisis presented us with an opportunity that couldn’t be missed. We proposed solutions that would be of greater social and economic benefit to Irish society than prison building” (IPRT 2013).

## Facts & Figures

Ireland's annual immigration detainee population has steadily fallen in recent years, according to official statistics. In 2010, 459 people were detained; in 2011, 395; and in 2012, 385 (Brennan 2013).

In 2011, there were 423 committals based on immigration issues, accounting for 395 individual detainees. This figure indicates a decrease of 13.9 percent from the 459 persons detained in 2010, following a decrease of 31.4 percent the previous year. The average daily number of persons in custody under immigration laws was 10 during 2011. On November 30, 2012, the number of immigration detainees in custody totalled 21, a fraction of the overall 4,298 in held by the Irish Prison Service (Irish Prison Service 2011).

In 2003-2004, a total of 2,798 people were held in prison for immigration-related violations and in 2004, approximately two thirds of migrant detainees were in held in custody for longer than 51 days (Kelly 2005, p.6).

While the numbers of detainees has been decreasing, the number of people ordered to the leave the country has steadily increased. In 2008, 1,285 people were issued return orders; by 2012, that number had increased to 2,065 (Eurostat).

In 1995, Ireland became a net immigration country. By 2006, the country's net immigration reached approximately 70,000 (CSO 2009, p.1). Rising unemployment rates and fallout from the global economic crisis have since seen net migration rates fall swiftly. In the 12 months leading up to April 2009, emigration increased to an estimated 65,100, while the number of immigrants entering the country over the same period declined to 57,300, making Ireland a net emigration country for the first time since 1995 (CSO 2009, p.1).

According to the OECD International Migration Database, as of 2011, Ireland's total foreign-born population was 752,486; in 2006, it was 601,732 ([OECD](#)). With a total population of 4,576,794 in 2011, international migrants as a percentage of Ireland's total population was approximately 16 percent that year.

Non-EU nationals constituted more than half the number of immigrants between 2001 and 2004. Since the accession of the ten new EU member states in 2004, EU nationals have dominated the immigrant influx, constituting 54 percent of the total non-Irish immigrants in 2007. In recent years, Ireland has established more stringent immigration policies that favour highly skilled migrants from non-EU countries. The Employment Permits Bill 2003 allows anyone from the EU unlimited access to the Irish labour market, except nationals from Romanian and Bulgarian. However, since 2008, the immigration rate has slowed significantly and economic problems have led to stricter immigration policies (Ruhs 2009).

The number of asylum applications in Ireland has fallen over the past decade, shrinking from 10,938 in 2000 to 1,250 in 2011. The majority of asylum applicants in Ireland

originate from Nigeria, Pakistan, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Zimbabwe (RIA 2009, p.2-3).

Ireland is notable for its low number of asylum claims that receive positive decisions. The Irish acceptance rate for refugees stands as the lowest in the European Union, with 1.5 percent acceptance at first instance and 6 percent on appeal. Ireland's recognition rates are significantly lower than the average recognition rate within the EU, which has been at approximately 27 percent (Anti Deportation Ireland 2012).

## List of Detention Sites

Name	Status (Year)	Location	GDP Facility Type	Detention Time-frame	Security	Authority	Management	Capacity	Demographics & Segregation
Castlerea Prison	In use (2013)	Harristown, Castlerea	Prison	Long-term	Secure	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service / Department of Justice and Equality	Irish Prison Service	351 (2010) (criminal and immigration detainees)	Adult males (2008)
Cloverhill Prison	In use (2013)	Clondalkin, Dublin	Prison	Long-term	Secure	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service / Department of Justice and Equality	Irish Prison Service	431 (2010) (criminal and immigration detainees)	Adult males (2008)
Cork Prison	In use (2013)	Cork City	Prison	Long-term	Secure	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service / Department of Justice and Equality	Irish Prison Service	272 (2010) (criminal and immigration detainees)	Adult males (2008)
Dochas Centre (Mountjoy Female Prison)	In use (2013)	Dublin	Prison	Long-term	Secure	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service / Department of Justice and Equality	Irish Prison Service	85 (2010) (criminal and immigration detainees)	Adult females (2008)
Limerick Prison	In use (2013)	Limerick	Prison	Long-term	Secure	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service / Department of Justice and Equality	Irish Prison Service	310 (2010) (criminal and immigration detainees) 275 males / 20 females	Adult males and females; gender segregation (2008)
Mountjoy Prison	In use (2013)	Dublin	Prison	Long-term	Secure	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service / Department of Justice and Equality	Irish Prison Service	590 (2010) (criminal and immigration detainees)	Adult males (2008)
Wheatfield Prison	In use (2013)	Clondalkin, Dublin	Prison	Long-term	Secure	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service / Department of Justice and Equality	Irish Prison Service	430 (2010) (criminal and immigration detainees)	Adult males (2008)



# Map of Detention Sites



### Country View

- 1. Castlerea Prison
- 2. Cloverhill Prison
- 3. Cork Prison
- 4. Dochas Centre (Mountjoy Female Prison)
- 5. Limerick Prison
- 6. Mountjoy Prison
- 7. Wheatfield Prison

## **Country links**

### **Government Agencies**

Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS)

[www.inis.gov.ie](http://www.inis.gov.ie)

Irish Prison Service

<http://www.irishprisons.ie/>

Refugee Appeals Tribunal

[www.refappeal.ie](http://www.refappeal.ie)

Reception & Integration Agency

[www.ria.irigov.ie](http://www.ria.irigov.ie)

### **International Organisations**

International Organisation for Migration – Ireland

[www.iomdublin.org](http://www.iomdublin.org)

International Organisation for Migration – Ireland Country Information

<http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/activities/europe/western-europe/ireland>

UN High Commissioner for Refugees - Ireland

[www.unhcr.ie](http://www.unhcr.ie)

UN High Commissioner for Refugees – Ireland Country Information

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e48e926>

### **NGOs and Research Institutions**

Akidwa (network of African and migrant women living in Ireland)

[www.akidwa.ie](http://www.akidwa.ie)

Amnesty International – Irish Section

[www.amnesty.ie](http://www.amnesty.ie)

Doras Luimni

[www.dorasluimni.org](http://www.dorasluimni.org)

The Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)

[www.iccl.ie](http://www.iccl.ie)

Irish Human Rights Commission

[www.ihrc.ie](http://www.ihrc.ie)

Refugee Legal Service

[www.legalaidboard.ie](http://www.legalaidboard.ie)

Irish Red Cross

[www.redcross.ie](http://www.redcross.ie)

Irish Refugee Council

[www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie](http://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie)

The Irish Immigrant Support Centre (NASC)

[www.nascireland.org](http://www.nascireland.org)

SPIRASI

[www.spirasi.ie](http://www.spirasi.ie)

## **Media**

The Irish Examiner

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/>

The Irish Independent

<http://www.independent.ie/>

The Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/>

Metro Éireann

<http://www.metroeireann.com/>

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