



Migration Watch UK's Track Record

History & Miscellaneous: MW 425

Migration Watch UK is an independent think tank which has been analysing the topic of immigration for more than two decades. We have a strong track record on making estimates:

1. In 2002, we estimated that non-EU net migration would run at two million over the following decade, including a small allowance for illegal immigration. At the time our projections were met with howls of derision, indeed sometimes abuse. The ONS later estimated that legal non-EU net migration in the period 2002-2011 was 2.1 million. Read our 2002 [paper](#).
2. In 2003, Home Office-commissioned research found that there would be between 5,000 and 13,000 EU8 arrivals annually following the 2004 EU enlargement. We described these estimates as '**almost worthless**' and suggested that a higher figure was more likely. In the event EU8 net migration averaged 72,000 per year (including an undercount identified by the 2011 Census). Read our 2003 [paper](#).
3. Just over a decade ago, we estimated the illegal migrant population to be just over a million (read our 2011 [summary](#)). Similar estimates of a million or more were subsequently issued by former senior Home Office personnel, including by a former head of the UK Border Agency and a former Director-General of Immigration Enforcement. Pew Research subsequently [estimated](#) that there were between 800,000 and 1.3 million unauthorised migrants here between 2014 and 2017. The centre of this range is just over a million.
4. In 2013, we estimated large inflows from Romania and Bulgaria, and that they would add around 50,000 per year to the population. A *Channel 4 News* [Fact Check](#) said: "**Predictions of a mass influx of immigrants from Bulgaria and Romania have failed to come true.**" In fact, the latest ONS analysis of net migration levels from these countries (based on their new administrative-data base estimates) suggests that net migration from these EU2 countries may have run at double this level between 2014 and 2020. Under the ONS's previous LTIM method for estimating migration net arrivals from the EU2 countries ran at 44,000 per year during the period 2014-2016. Read our 2013 [paper](#).
5. In July 2021, Migration Watch UK Chairman Alp Mehmet was [quoted in a national newspaper](#) estimating that 25,000 migrants would be recorded crossing the English Channel in boats by the end

of the year. The total detected crossing from 1 January to 31 December 2021 was just over 25,500 ([Home Office statistics](#) and our own [Channel Tracking Station](#)).

Recognition of our veracity

“[Migration Watch UK’s] record entitles it to be trusted. [Their] estimate of Romanian and Bulgarian migration has proved almost exactly correct” - Stephen Glover, Journalist and columnist.

“Migration Watch were accurate in predicting A8 movement from 2004... If someone had previously cried wolf and, on that occasion a wolf had appeared, a rational person might give more weight to their opinion” - Ed West, Columnist.

“[Migration Watch UK’s] statistics are irrefutable. Even the Home Office admitted there was no point arguing with them” - Harriet Sergeant, Author, journalist and Research Fellow for the Centre For Policy Studies.

“[Migration Watch UK] has been about the only body to tell the unvarnished truth about immigration over the past couple of decades” - Richard Littlejohn, Author, broadcaster and journalist.

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