

How relevant is EU citizenship in times of crisis? Citizenship, free movement and Covid-19

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EU citizens as privileged migrants

- S. Mantu , P. Minderhoud & E. Guild (2020) EU Citizenship and Free Movement Rights. Taking Supranational Citizenship Seriously, Leiden: Brill.
- Main argument: EU citizenship has made its presence felt especially through the right to free movement and the distinctive form of mobility that it champions, centred around the citizen's right to move and the state's diminished capacity to refuse entry and terminate residence rights
- Covid-19 crisis and the re-establishment of internal borders and travel restrictions, including travel bans

The Covid-19 crisis: A crisis of (EU) citizenship?

- EU response to national measures that made mobility increasingly difficult, if not impossible
- Case study on Romania: discouraging return while encouraging immigration and no interest in safeguarding rights or ensuring protection

EU's response: coordination

- Initially, the EU was criticized for its lack of response that allowed the unrestrained proliferation of national measures affecting free movement and mobility, more generally
- No attempt to challenge the imposition of national measures derogating from EU free movement law or to check compatibility with EU law
- EU travel ban coupled with an emphasis on the right to return: EU citizens and EU residents stranded abroad or within the EU should be allowed to travel to their state of nationality or residence
- Internally, EU's response prioritized the mobility of 'workers in critical occupations'
- 'EU labour market': sectoral reliance on migrant workers and increased vulnerability

Romania: economy v safety

- 16 March 2020 – 15 May 2020: state of emergency + national lock down
- After 15 May 2020: state of alert
- Measures taken: home isolation or institutional quarantine for persons entering Romania, gradual closure of border crossing points, restriction or prohibition of international road, rail, maritime, water and air travel
- Military Ordinance no 7 of 4 April 2020: exceptions for the transport of seasonal workers from Romania to other states with the approval of authorities from country of destination via irregular flights (charters)
- Romanian seasonal workers contracted Covid-19 while at work in the Netherlands, Germany and UK

Romanian labour migrants: Citizens of nowhere ?

Country	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Total	
Spain		0	203	330	786	966	216	2501
Italy		0	1109	0	331	111	0	1551
UK		0	0	0	137	726	0	863
cruise ships		6	90	0	825	0	0	921
Netherlands		0	0	41	139	480	65	725
France		0	0	42	204	407	0	653
Germany		0	0	0	92	342	0	434
Belgium		0	0	34	134	91	0	259
Saudi Arabia		0	0	92	85	77	0	254
UAE		0	0	56	130	0	0	186
Malta		0	74	0	93	0	0	167
Egypt		0	144	0	0	0	0	144
Cyprus		0	0	0	140	0	0	140
Jordan		0	78	0	10	26	0	114
Portugal		0	101	0	0	0	0	101
Austria		0	0	0	55	16	0	71
Turkey		0	0	0	0	70	0	70
Iraq		0	0	52	14	0	0	66
Morocco		0	87	0	0	0	0	87
Hungary		0	59	0	0	0	0	59
Kuwait		0	0	56	0	0	0	56
Lebanon		0	0	0	41	0	0	41
Syria		0	0	0	11	0	0	11
Total		6	1945	703	3227	3312	281	9474

Conclusions

- EU response to the Covid-19 mobility crisis: a mixed bag
- Romania: enforceable mobility rights must be accompanied by enforceable workers' rights