

Some findings from a questionnaire about foreign citizens in IRCE prisons

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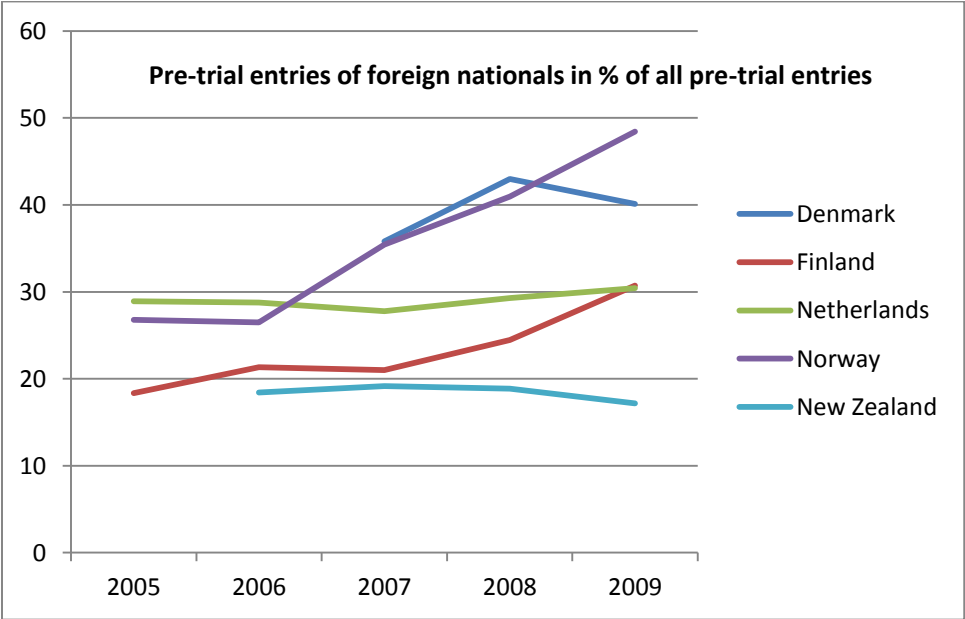
The IRCE research task force

This is short summary on some major findings from the replies to a questionnaire about foreigners in prison in countries that participate in the International Roundtable of Correctional Excellence (IRCE). With the exception of Belgium, Ireland, Scotland and Canada, the remaining six member countries answered the questionnaire.

Entries and yearly averages of foreign citizens in IRCE prison in 2005 – 2009.

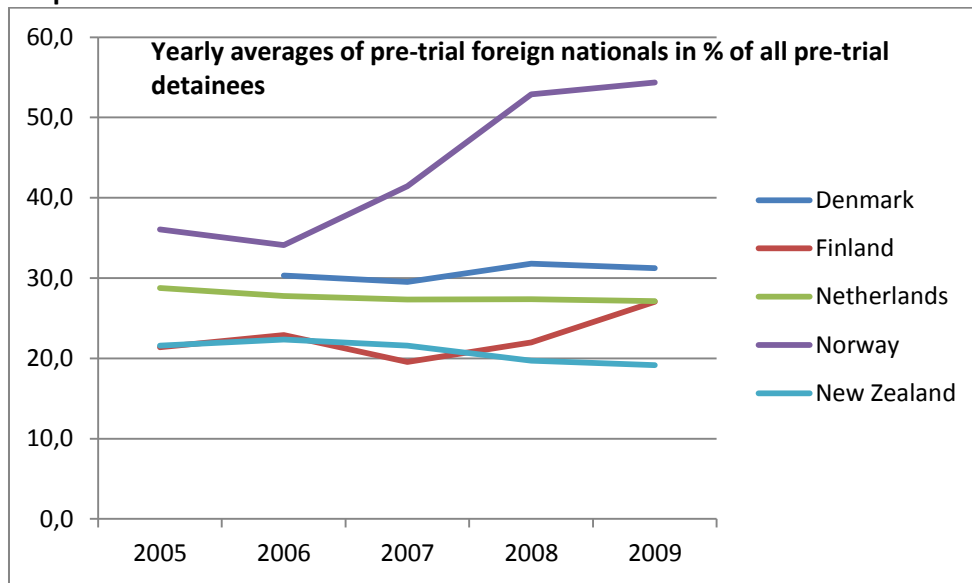
Except New Zealand, all countries have experienced a rise in the proportion of foreigners commencing pre-trial detention in the latest years, but from 2006 the rise is consistent and steep in Norway. In 2009 foreigners constitute almost a half of all entries to pre-trial detention in Norway, cf. graph 1. Sweden could not give data on pre-trial entries.

Graph 1



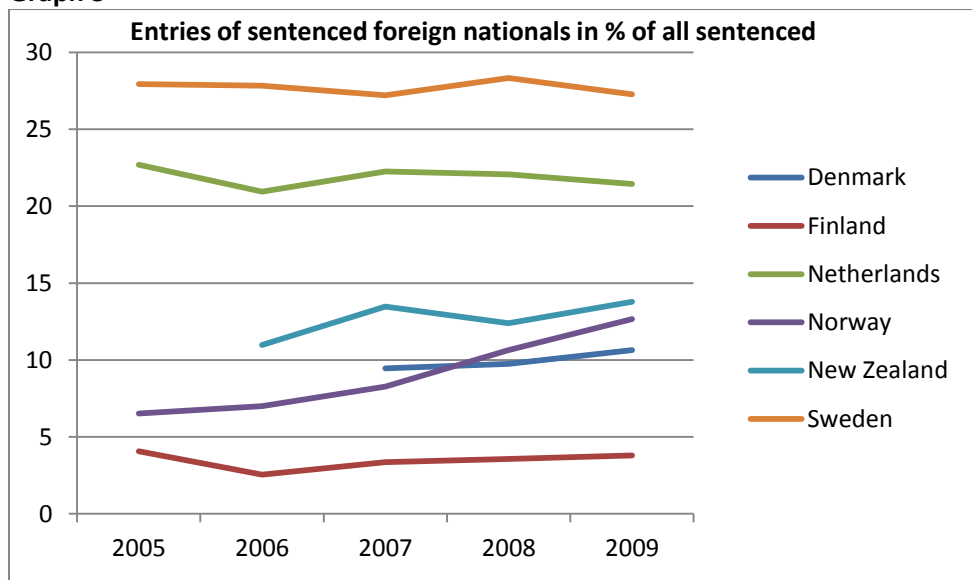
Actually more than a half of the average population of pre-trial inmates, are foreign nationals in Norway, whereas in the other countries the proportion vary around 20 – 30 % (cf. graph 2).

Graph 2



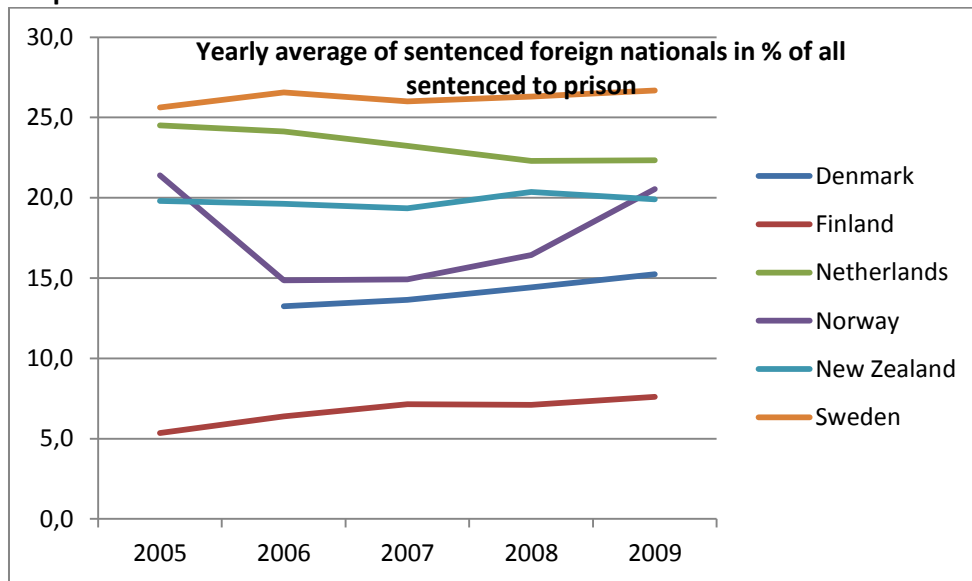
If we look at the proportion of sentenced foreign nationals of all sentenced prisoners starting serving their sentences, Sweden is at the peak (cf. graph 3). A little more than a quarter of those who started serving a prison sentence, are foreigners. In the Netherlands, the equivalent proportion is approximately one fifth. Foreign nationals constituted only 4 % of those who started serving a sentence in Finland in 2009. In the other countries, the percentage varies between 10 and 15.

Graph 3



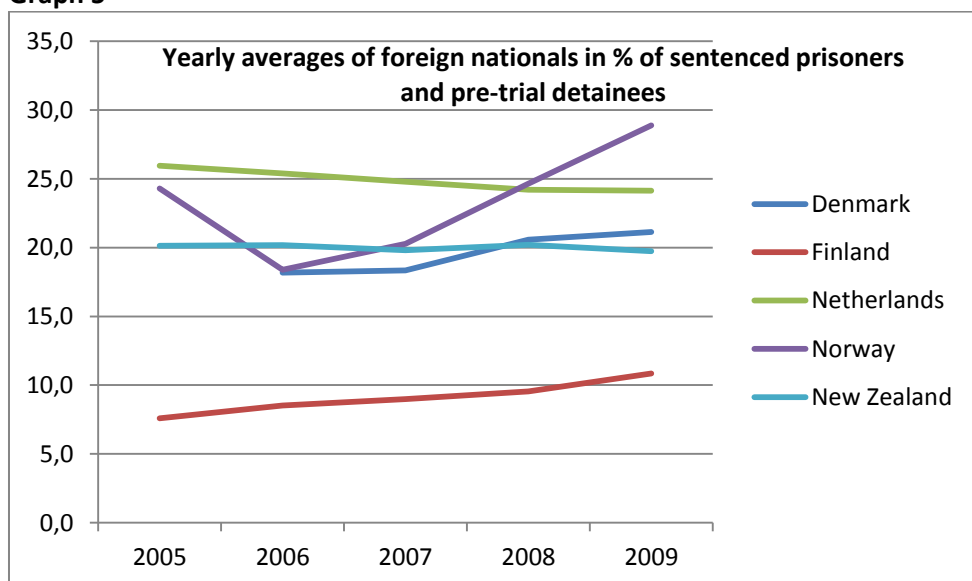
Looking at yearly averages of sentenced foreign nationals in percent of all sentenced to prison (cf. graph 4), Sweden also keeps up the lead with a little more than one fourth being foreigners. Finland is at the bottom, with 8 % foreigners among sentenced prisoners.

Graph 4



Conclusively, with the possible exception of Sweden (data on pre-trial detainees are missing), both the total numbers and the proportion of foreign citizens seem to be increasing in all the Scandinavian countries, but this is not the case in the other IRCE countries. Looking at the total yearly averages of foreign nationals in percent of all (sentenced and pre-trial detainees together), Norway takes the lead with almost 30 % foreign nationals in 2009 (cf. graph 5). The rise in Norway has been quite steep and continuing since 2006. There has been a gradual rise up to 21 % in Denmark and up to 11 % in Finland. In the Netherlands, the proportion is slowly going down to 24 % in 2009, and there is a stable proportion around 20 % in New Zealand.

Graph 5



Recent numbers of foreigners at a certain date

Foreign citizens constitute a total of 23 % of all inmates at a certain date in the reporting member countries. Norway is at the peak with one third of inmates being foreigners.

	All inmates	Foreign	% foreign	Date of reference
Denmark	4 115	863	21 %	15.2.2011
Finland	3 293	412	13 %	15.2.2011
Netherlands	11 749	2 800	24 %	30.11.2010
New Zealand	8 799	1 698	19 %	31.10.2010
Norway	3 574	1 146	32 %	14.11.2010
Sweden ¹	5 740	1 572	27 %	01.10.2010
Total	37 270	8 491	23 %	

Average sentence length in months on a certain day

On average, data shows that average sentence length for sentenced foreign inmates is 9 % higher than for other inmates in prisons in the reporting countries. Sentence length for foreigners is surprisingly 56 % higher in Norway. The Netherlands is the only country in which the sentence length on average is lower for foreigners than for other inhabitants in prison.

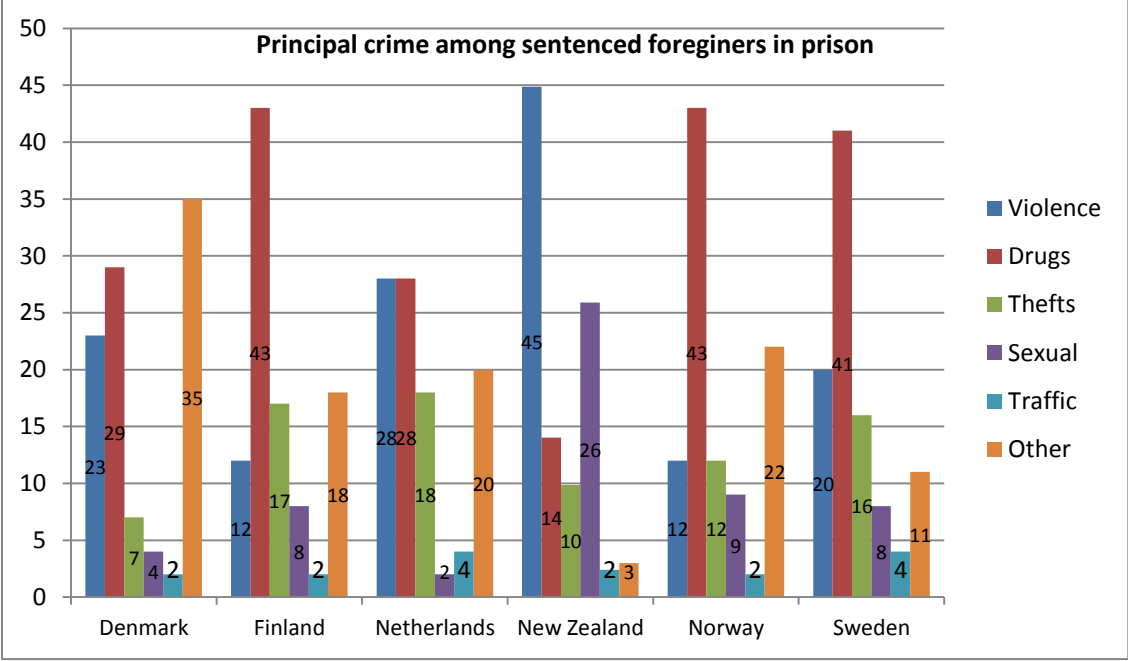
	Native	Foreign	Difference	% difference
Denmark	37	46	9	24 %
Finland	47	55	8	17 %
Netherlands	29	25	-4	-14 %
New Zealand	46	60	14	30 %
Norway	32	50	18	56 %
Sweden	35	44	9	26 %
Total average	38	47	9	

Principal crime among sentenced foreigners in prison

Graph 6 shows the percentages of principal crime types among sentenced foreigners in prison on a certain day. Drug crimes constitute more than 40 % of all sentenced foreigners in Finland, Norway and Sweden. Compared to the other Nordic countries, the percentage of sentenced foreigners for drug crimes is only 29 % in Denmark. The unspecified category “other” is actually the largest principal crime type in Denmark. Among the Nordic countries Denmark also has the largest proportion of sentenced foreigners in prison for violence, 23 %, twice the size in Finland and Norway, where the percentage is 12 %. In New Zealand violence is clearly the dominating cause for sentencing foreigners to prison. 45 % of their foreigners in prison are sentenced for violence. In the Netherlands the principal crime types “violence” and “drugs” are the same size, 28 %. The proportion of sentenced foreigners for thefts is also highest in the Netherlands – 18 %, closely followed by Finland and Sweden with their percentages of 17 and 16, respectively.

¹ Only sentenced prisoners are reported.

Graph 6



The 5 most numerous foreign nationalities sentenced to prison

The table below shows the 5 most numerous foreign nationalities that started serving a prison sentence in 2009. Entries to remand custody would have revealed a little different picture of the nationalities, especially in countries with growing numbers of inmates in remand custody, such as Norway.

Iraq is among the “top five” nationalities in four of six reporting countries, i.e. Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Somalia is also represented in four countries; Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Norway. Poland is represented in three of the reporting countries; the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. In Denmark and the Netherlands Turks are among the top five nationalities, but the Turks are not found in the other European IRCE countries. In Norway and Sweden Lithuanians will be found among the top five nationalities, whereas in Finland Estonians are on the top of the list of foreign nationals.

Denmark	Finland	Netherlands	New Zealand	Norway	Sweden
Somalia	Estonia	Morocco	Samoa	Poland	Finland
Iraq	Sweden	Poland	Cook Islands	Lithuania	Poland
Turkey	Russia	Turkey	Tonga	Sweden	Lithuania
Yugoslavia	Somalia	Somalia	Europe	Somalia	Serbia & Montenegro
Vietnam	Iraq	Surinam	Niue	Iraq	Iraq

Else

All countries report that you do not have to be a national citizen to get work, education or access to serving in low security prisons.