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EDITORIAL

2011 statistics: The decline continues

As it does every year, the ISS/IRC has compiled the statistics from the 12 leading receiving countries in matters of intercountry adoption and provides an analysis of the resulting trends.

With a total of just under 22,000 intercountry adoptions for the 12 leading receiving countries (see table below), the decline initiated in 2004 is continuing inexorably. The United States registers even lower levels (9,319), as are Spain and France. For these countries, it is clear that situations of transition – entirely or partially linked to the ratification of the HC-1993, and which are currently prevailing in Haiti, Vietnam, Kazakhstan and Guatemala to a certain extent – are an important element to take into consideration.

The equation ‘ratification of the HC-1993 = decrease of intercountry adoptions’ holds true once more, but, with due respect for its critics, the effective implementation of the Convention in the country of origin is ultimately real progress, in

particular through the development of alternative support measures at national level.

It is worth highlighting, in this regard, that in real terms, the year 2011 marks, for the first time, near parity between adoptions subject to the HC-1993 and those outside the framework of the Convention (10 non-Hague countries of origin

make up 49.5% of all cases).

For the receiving countries, this initial observation is, of course, hardly satisfactory, and the waiting lists risk becoming quite a bit longer still.

However, a significant decrease in the number of applicants for intercountry adoption in several receiving countries is becoming noticeable. This may be explained by a better public understanding of the current constraints of intercountry adoption, and perhaps by a greater appeal of medically-assisted reproduction methods, in particular the use of foreign surrogates, which has been discussed in previous Monthly Reviews.

Evolution of the number of intercountry adoptions since 2003									
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
U.S.A	21,616	22,884	22,728	20,679	19,613	17,433	12,753	11,058	9,319
Italy	2,772	3,402	2,874	3,188	3,420	3,977	3,964	4,130	4,022
France	3,995	4,079	4,136	3,977	3,162	3,271	3,017	3,504	1,995
Spain	3,951	5,541	5,423	4,472	3,648	3,156	3,006	2,891	2,560
Canada	2,180	1,955	1,871	1,535	1,712	1,208	1,411	2,006	694
Germany	1,720	1,632	1,453	1,388	1,432	1,251	1,025	1,412	934
Sweden	1,046	1,109	1,083	879	800	793	912	655	538
The Netherlands	1,154	1,307	1,185	816	782	767	682	705	528
Denmark	522	527	586	448	429	395	498	419	338
Switzerland	722	658	452	455	394	497	444	301	471
Australia	472	502	585	576	568	440	441	222	215
Norway	714	706	582	448	426	304	344	353	297
Total	39,670	43,142	41,921	38,285	35,818	32,834	27,691	27,552	21,911

Policies implemented in countries of origin

The directions of social policy taken by major countries of origin, such as China, Russia, Ukraine and South Korea, also play a significant role in the change in the total number of intercountry adoptions. By declaring their intention to support domestic adoption, and by promoting the adoption of children with special needs, these countries

Country of origin	2010	2011
China	4,672	4,098
Ethiopia	3,977	3,144
Russia	3,158	3,017
Ukraine	1,091	1,054
South Korea	991	920
Colombia	1,549	1,522
Vietnam	1,243	620
Haiti	1,361	142
Guatemala	55	32
India	473	688
Philippines	413	472
Brazil	373	359
Poland	307	304
Taiwan	310	311
Kazakhstan	434	179
Thailand	124	258
South Africa	71	120
Nigeria	236	218
Bulgaria	230	259
Mali	123	154
DRC	166	339
Ghana	128	107
U.S.A	147	97
Latvia	120	116
Hungary	117	154

have put the brakes on the development of intercountry adoptions. There is also a purely political will to change the country's image, so as to no longer be perceived, especially nationally, as a country that is a 'provider' of children. The situation in Ethiopia – the second country of origin on the general list – remains uncertain: with a decrease of 20% compared to 2010, the country seems to be showing signs of its willingness to better regulate its procedures and to slow down the rhythm, but core decisions (the ratification of the HC-1993, the obtaining of

consents, the situation in the provinces) are yet to follow.

A constant volume

Several countries have implemented systems capable of managing a relatively constant number of intercountry adoptions each year, as is the case of Colombia, the Philippines, Brazil, Poland, Taiwan, South Africa, Bulgaria, Mali, Latvia, Hungary, etc. This consistency may be viewed as a guarantee, insofar as it demonstrates the ability of these countries to manage intercountry adoptions steadily, without suffering from too many internal or external difficulties.

The figures for India and Thailand are an enigma, since they have practically doubled between 2010 and 2011, in spite of the more restrictive policies adopted in these two countries.

A concern: The Democratic Republic of Congo

With 339 intercountry adoptions in 2011, the Democratic Republic of Congo has increased its number of children adopted through intercountry adoption tenfold in a period of four years (2008: 36 cases recorded). Consistent reports also indicate that intermediaries are increasingly active and do not hesitate to promote the adoption of Congolese children. These two elements must be interpreted as early-warning signs of a sharp increase in adoptions in the DRC, in what should be considered as a 'post-conflict' context, and which cannot offer the necessary guarantees for the processing of large-scale adoption. The ISS/IRC is closely monitoring these developments and hopes to soon be able to carry out a mission locally. It calls upon receiving countries to exercise restraint in the potential development of procedures with the DRC.

The ISS/IRC Team
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