

Assessing immigration scenarios for the European Union in 2030 – Plausible, probable, relevant?

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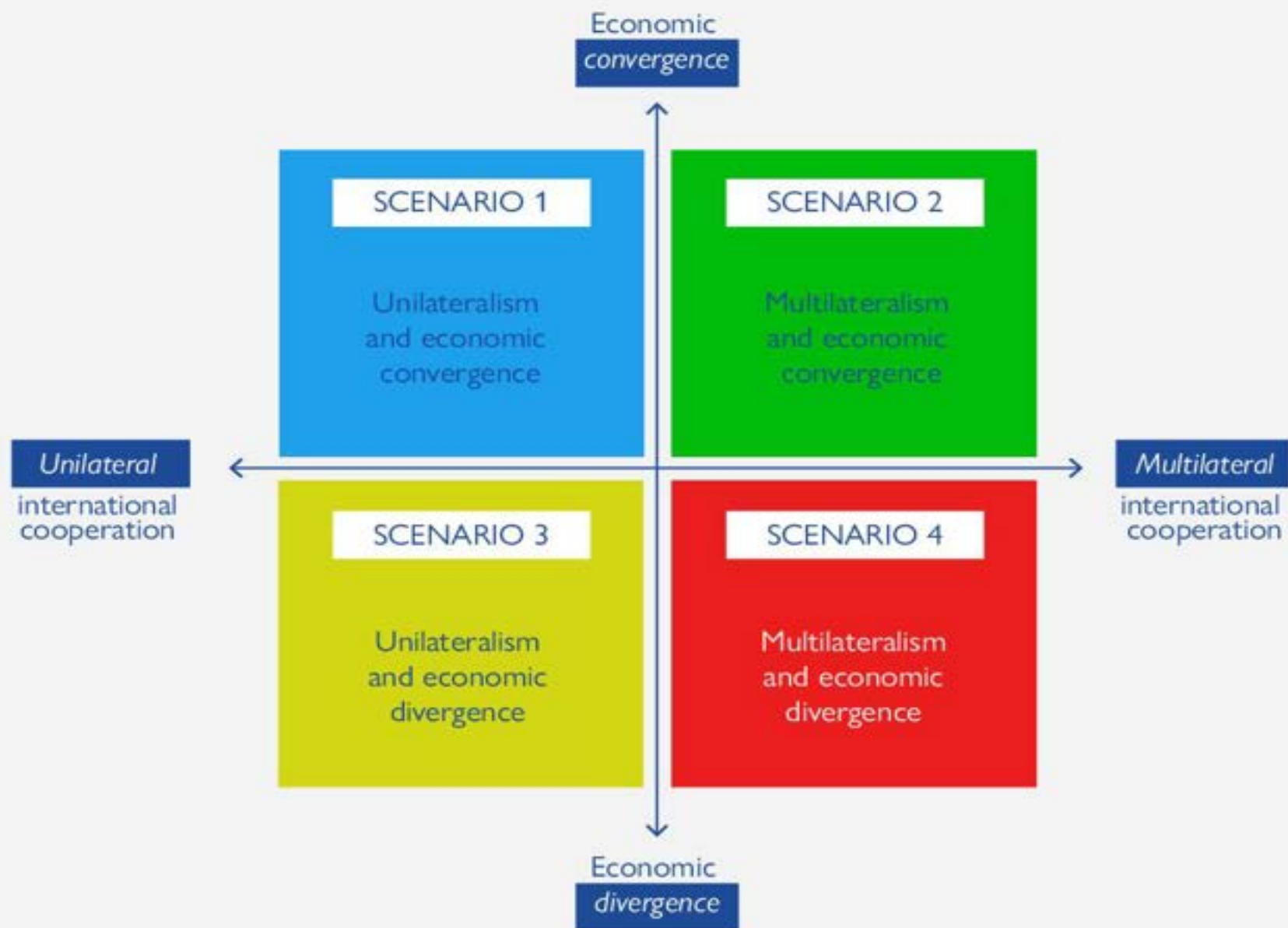
This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No Ares (2017) 5627812 - 770121

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1. Methodology



Source: Own elaboration based on migration scenario reports consulted

Delphi methodology

Definition:

- Method to show degree of expert agreement in the attempt to foresee future events with high uncertainty.

Our approach combining scenarios with Delphi:

- Quantitative estimate of migration flows (Delphi)
- Use different scenarios (migration drivers)



Survey data

Key questions:

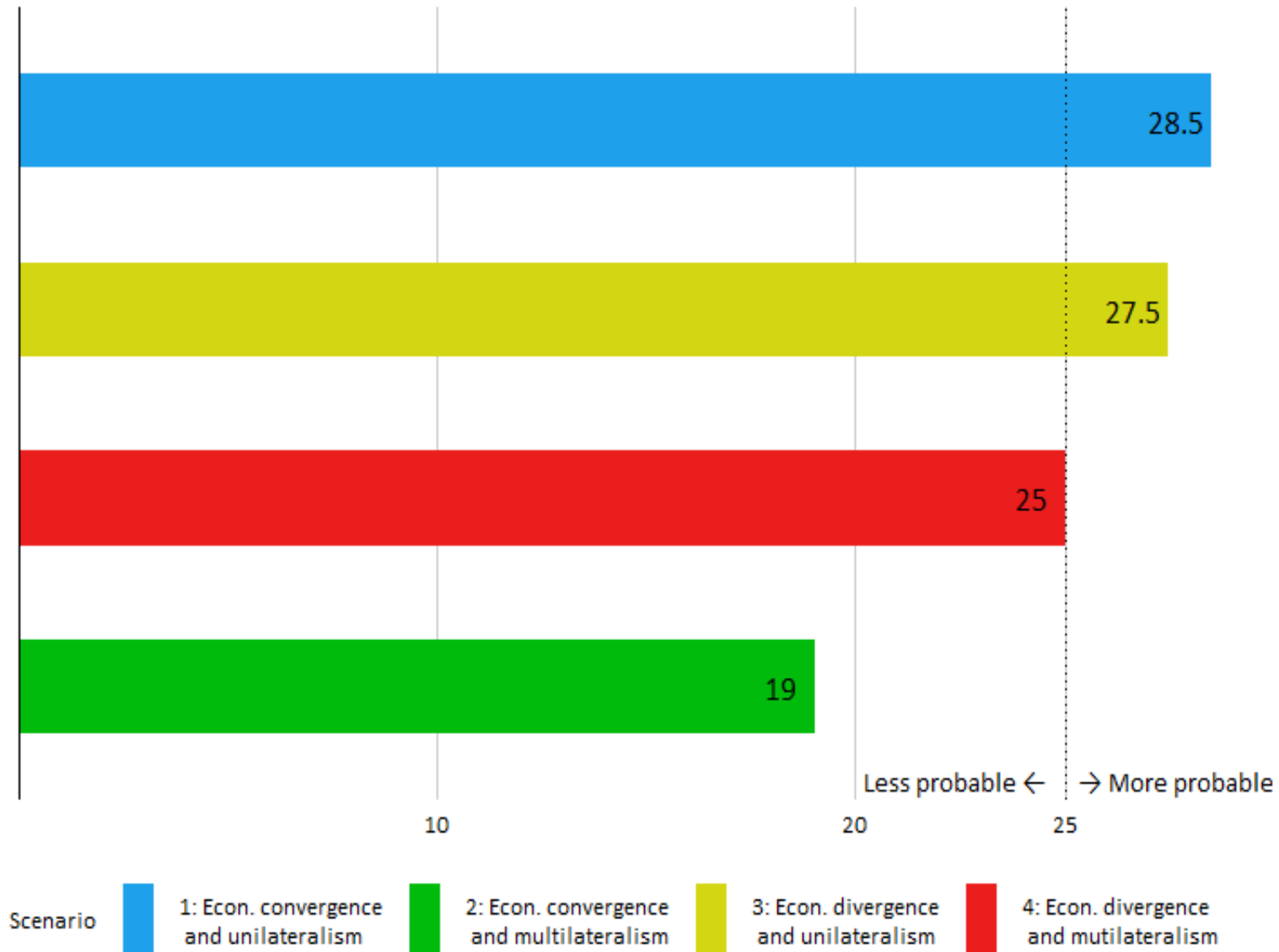
- Scenario Probability
- Absolute flows and confidence
 - 1. Total inflows
 - 2. Labour inflows
 - 3. Highly-skilled inflows
 - 4. Irregular inflows
 - 5. Humanitarian flows

- First round: 168
- Second round: 145
- Net sample*: 110

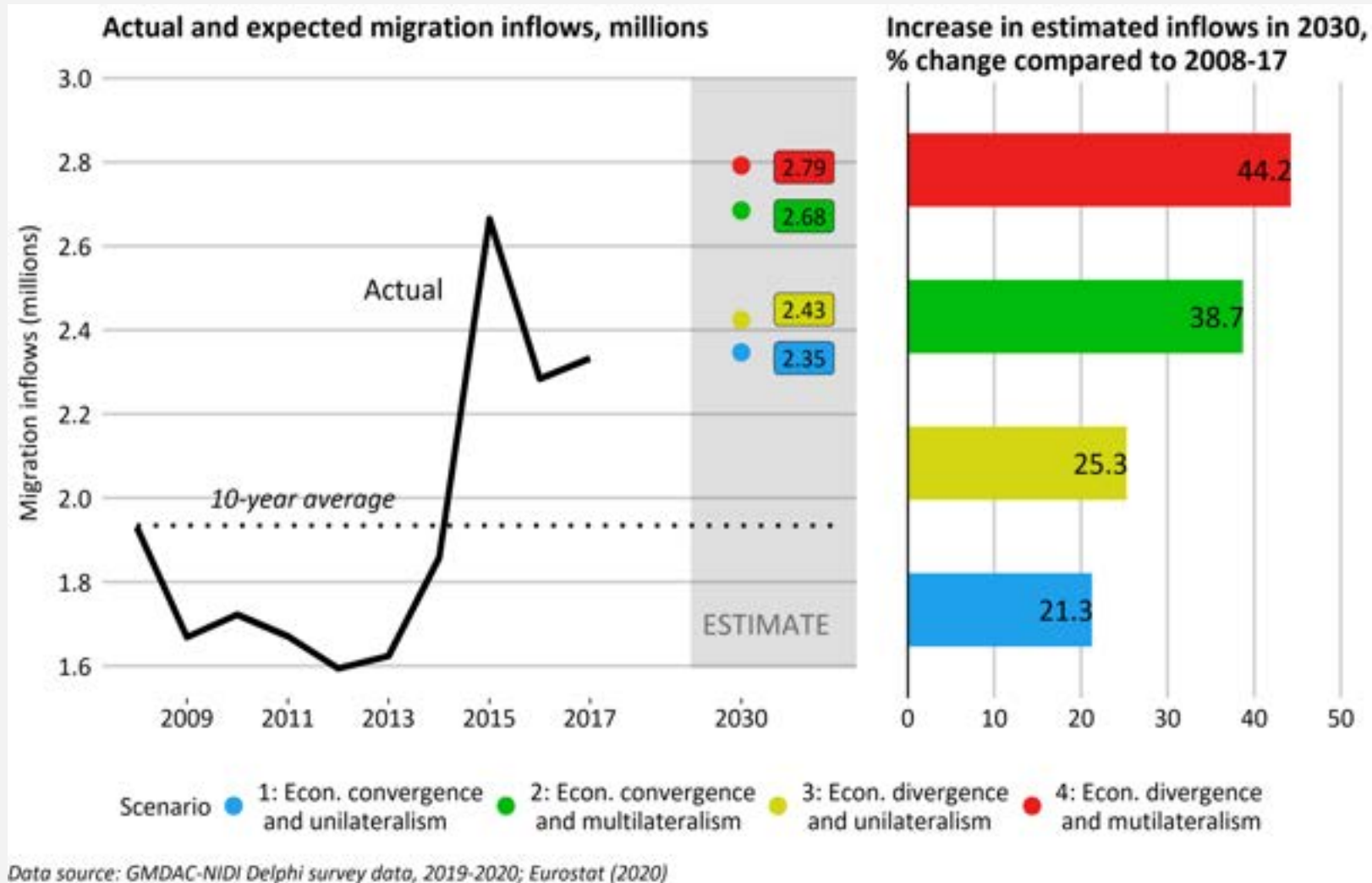
*At least 5 years of experience in migration, and expertise in European migration

2. Results

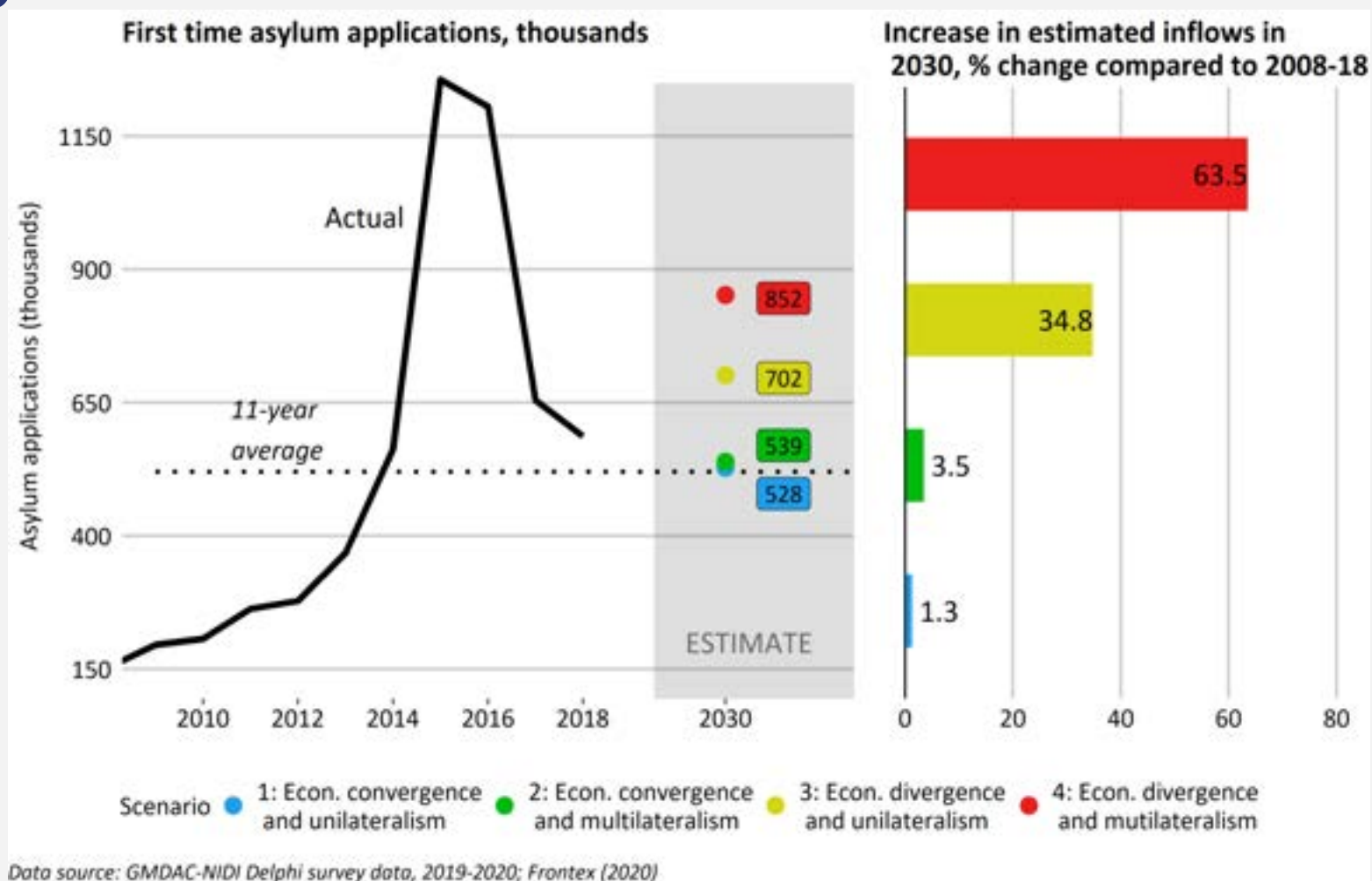
Relative probability of migration scenarios, %
25 = equal probability



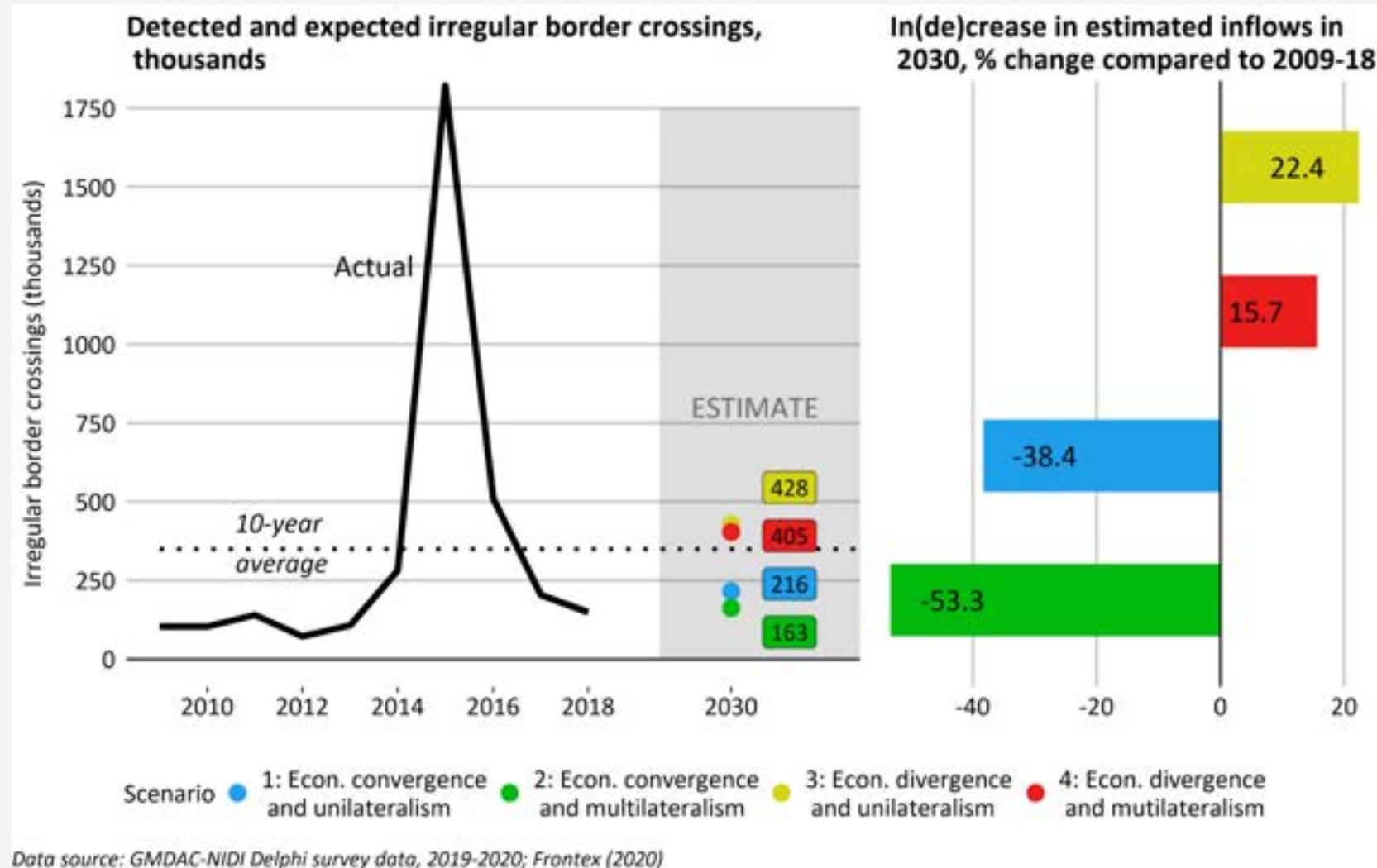
Annual migration inflows to the EU-28



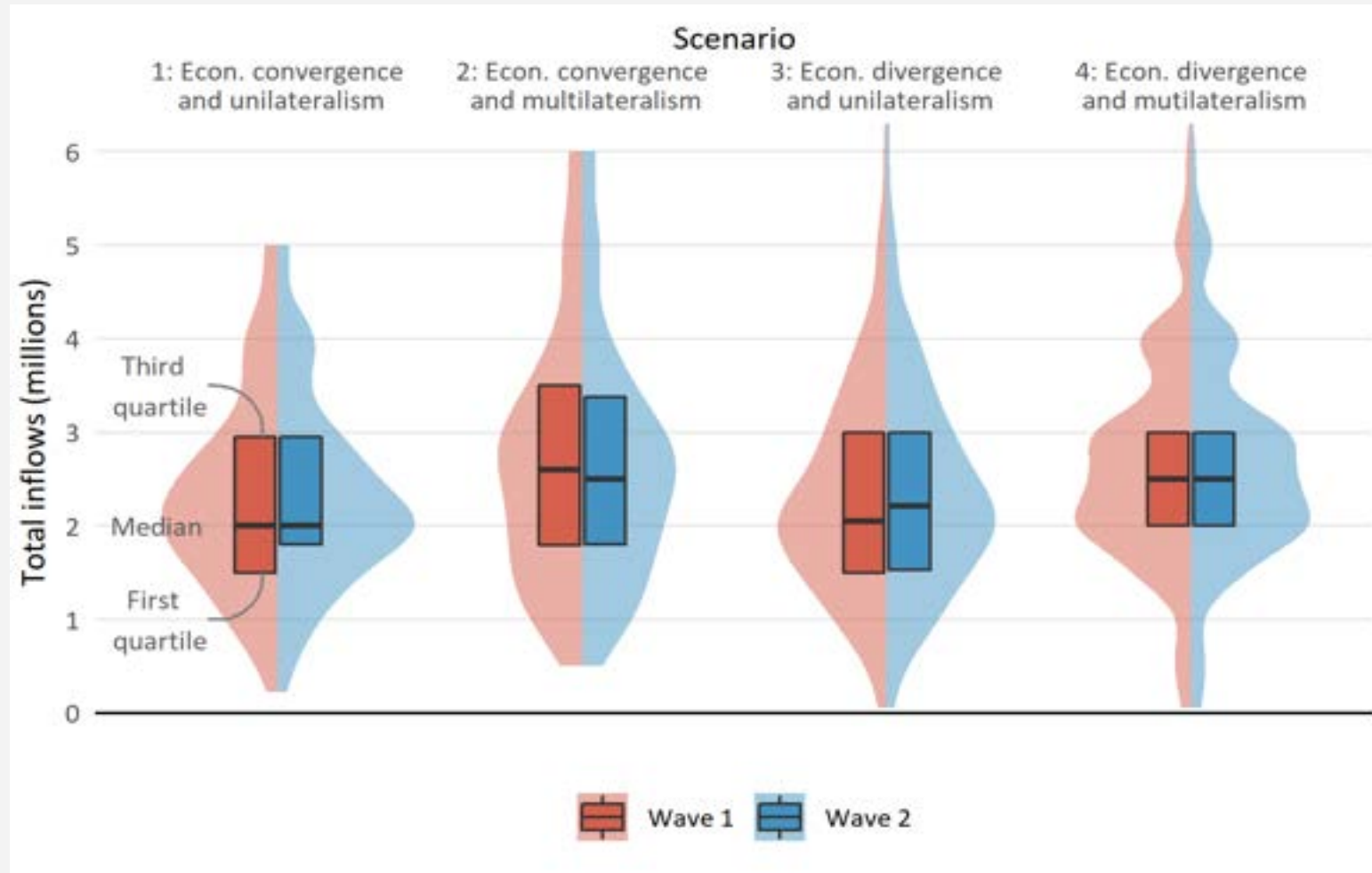
Annual first-time asylum applications to the EU-28



Annual irregular border crossings to the EU-28



Variation and convergence in expert responses



Conclusions

1. Leading experts are generally very uncertain, don't agree and don't converge
2. "Best case" scenario least likely
3. Multilateralism drives higher total migration, while economic divergence drives irregular migration and asylum applications
4. Overall experts expect increase in flows (except irregular) compared to 2009-2017, and modest increases or decreases compared to 2015/16

Policy implications

1. Policy use of scenarios: strategic long-term thinking of executive decision makers.
2. However, the level of disagreement and uncertainty among experts limits the use of scenarios for improving operational preparedness in the short and medium term
3. Scenarios and expert opinion should not be assessed based on their ability to provide actionable insights but rather their ability to provide input to discussions on policy design, understand the complexity of migration and challenge of assumptions

Thank you!

<https://publications.iom.int/books/assessing-immigration-scenarios-european-union-2030>

<https://migrationresearch.com/migration-scenarios>

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Summary on scenarios

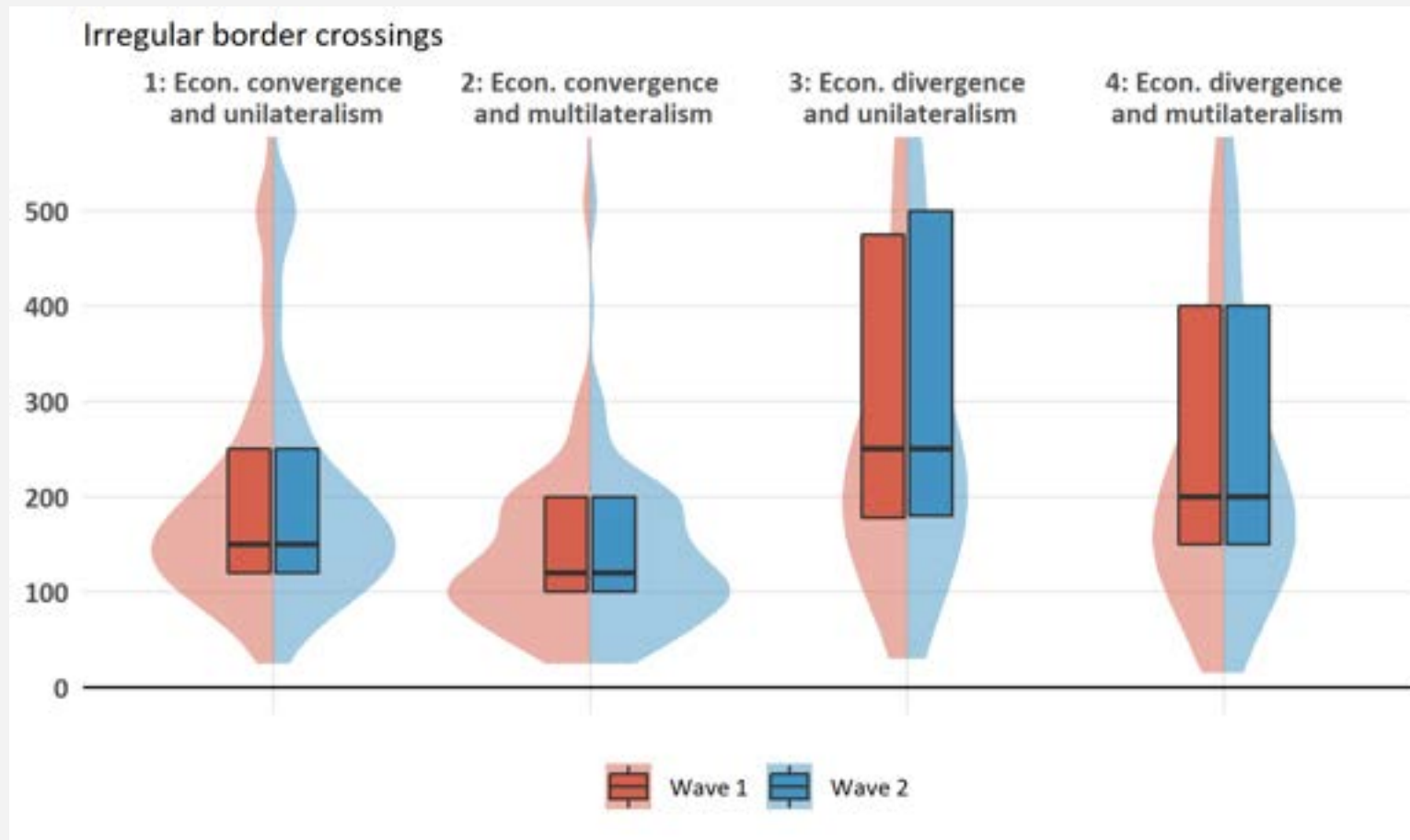
Best usage	long-term strategic planning
Typical output	narrative storyline about the future of migration
Type of migration	all types (not bound by data limitation)
Uncertainty	integral part of scenarios, but no quantification
Main disadvantage	unwieldy to communicate, may reflect participants' bias

Analised sample

Variable	Category	Total	Share
Years of experience in migration	0 - 4	0	0.0
	5 - 9	34	30.9
	10 - 14	19	17.3
	15 - 19	20	18.2
	>=20	37	33.6
Stakeholder	Other	6	5.5
	Practitioner (civil servant, policy-maker)	31	28.2
	Scholar (university professor, researcher)	73	66.4
Academic background*	Political science	38	34.6
	Sociology	40	36.4
	Demography	26	23.6
	Economics	23	20.9
	Law	14	12.7
	Psychology	3	2.7
	Other discipline	27	24.6
Experience in migration research*	Drivers	46	41.8
	Forecasting	28	25.5
	From a region	66	60.0
	Scenarios	30	27.3
	Other methods	34	30.9
Regional expertise*	Africa	45	40.9
	Americas	24	21.8
	Asia	26	23.6
	Europe	110	100.0
	Oceania	7	6.4
Total experts		110	

*Multiple response question

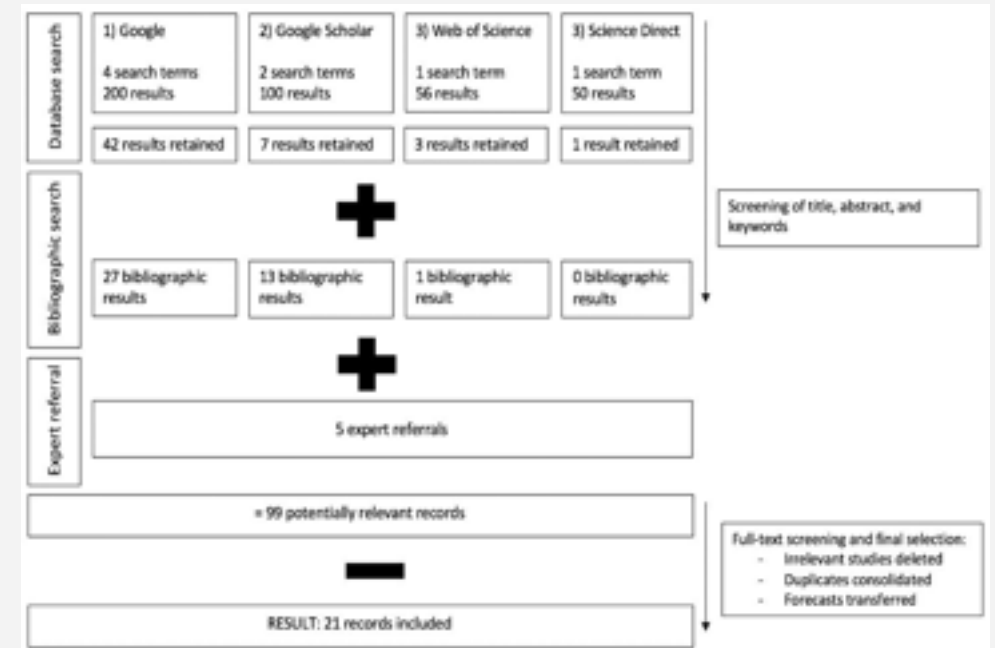
Variation: Irregular border crossings



In brief

To take stock of existing migration scenarios and evaluate them in light of future projects, we:

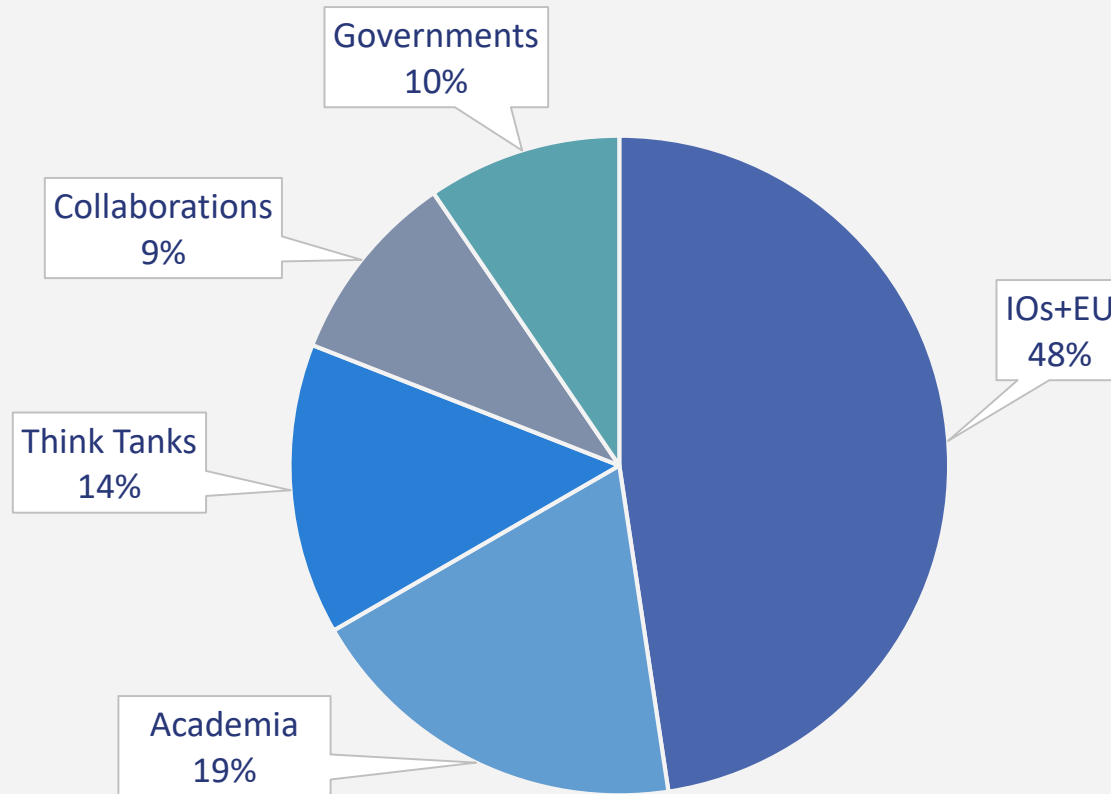
- conducted a systematic literature review
- screened 406 database results + 41 bibliographic searches + 5 expert referrals
- selected 21 European migration scenarios
- analysed their meta-information, methods and content
- identified strengths and weaknesses



Definition

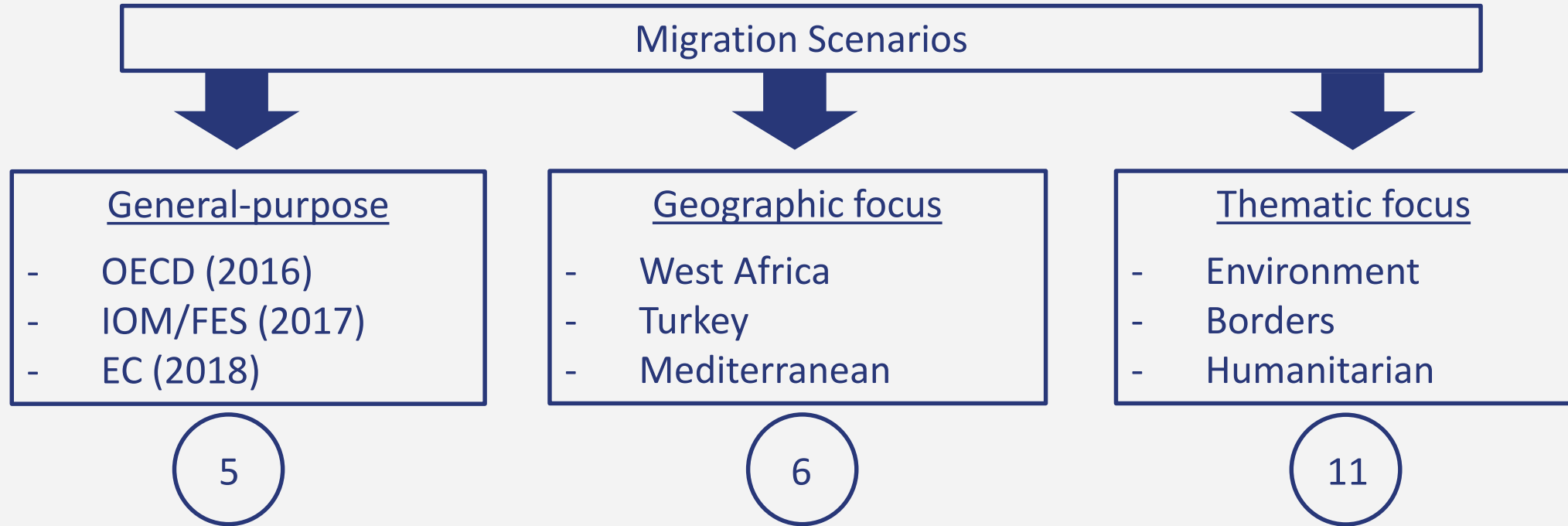
Migration scenarios are systematically developed narratives about the future of migration which emphasize possible structural changes and their consequences for migration. In contrast to forecasts, they hold no claim to become reality but instead can be understood as thought experiments of the type “what if...”.

Who Produces Scenarios?



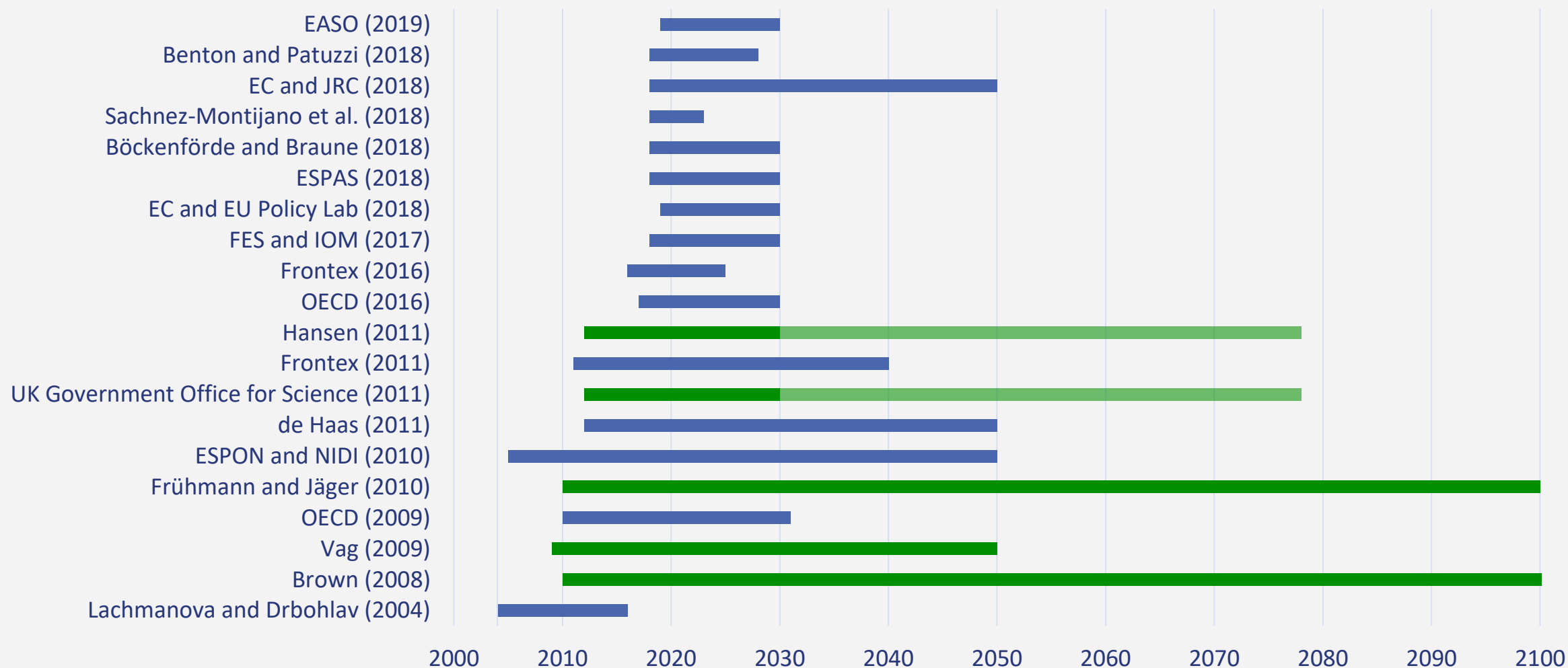
- Almost half of all scenarios are created by international organizations or the EU
- However, many of those scenarios call on academic experts for input

Three Types of Scenarios:



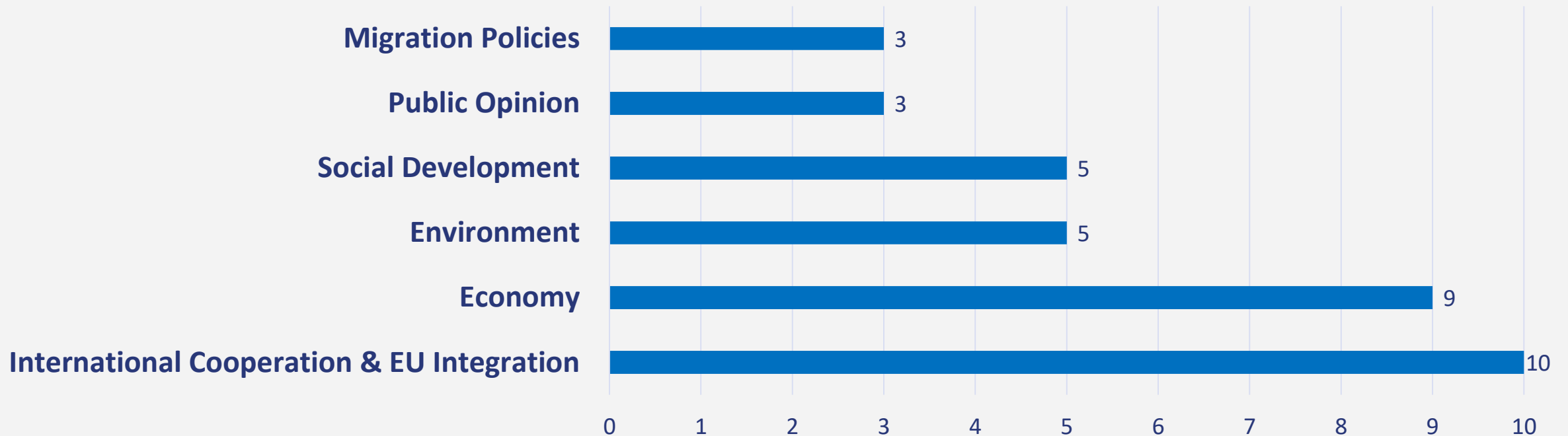
- Most scenarios address specific themes connected to migration, or focus on particular regions

Time Horizons in the Scenarios



Note: Migration scenarios with a focus on the environment are marked green, all others are blue.

International Cooperation the most Defining Issue?



- Storylines are created along « dimensions », i.e. macro-contextual factors
- Focus on highly uncertain and most impactful factors