

Europe recorded in 2015 an unprecedented number of asylum seekers and refugees with up to 1.2 million asylum applications (Figure 3.7) ; an estimated 250 000 to 350 000 people could be granted refugee or similar status, more than in any previous European refugee crisis since World War II. As during previous refugee crises in the 1990s the impact is concentrated in a few countries. In the OECD, Turkey is the most affected, currently hosting as many as 1.9 million Syrians as well as a large number of people from Iraq. Within the European Union, Italy, Greece and Hungary are on the front line but the main destination countries are Germany, in absolute terms, and Sweden and Austria, relative to their population.

**More than in previous crises, asylum seekers are very diverse in terms of country of origin, profile and motivation.** Recent refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) are more skilled than other groups and those who came, for example, during the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s. There are more unaccompanied minors (children without a responsible adult to care for them) arriving now than previously. Refugee flows tend to concentrate in countries with the most favourable economic conditions. A strong jobs market seems to be the most important determinant of flows for main refugee groups.

**On average in the OECD, 13% of the population was foreign-born in 2014.** The share of foreign-born within the population was highest in Australia, Canada, Israel, Luxembourg, New Zealand and Switzerland, where at least one in five people were foreign-born (Figure 3.8). Nearly two-thirds of the OECD countries had an immigrant population exceeding one in ten of the population, whereas the share of immigrants is under 5% in seven countries. This ratio increased in most OECD countries over the last decade where on average the immigrant population constituted around 9.5% of the population around 2000s.

**Immigrant offspring account for more than 1 in 4 in the population aged 15-34, a sizeable share of the young in OECD countries.** In the 22 OECD countries for which recent data are available, in 2013, nearly one in five 15-34 year-olds was the child of an immigrant or had immigrated as a child. A further 9% arrived in the host country as adults (Figure 3.9). The United States, Germany and France host the largest numbers of native-born offspring with two foreign-born parents. However, in relative terms, the highest shares of immigrant offspring are to be found in European countries whose total populations have substantial proportions of immigrants (Luxembourg, Israel and Switzerland) and in countries with a significant population growth through migration like in Australia and Canada. In the more recent migration destinations of southern Europe as well as in Finland, by contrast, less than 1% of young people were born in the host country to foreign-born parents.

#### Definition and measurement

The terms asylum-seeker and refugee are often confused: an asylum-seeker is someone who applies for international protection, but whose claim has not yet been definitively evaluated. National asylum systems are there to decide which asylum seekers actually qualify for international protection. Those judged through proper procedures not to be refugees, nor to be in need of any other form of international protection, can be sent back to their home countries. Data on asylum seekers are from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Immigrants are, in the first instance, defined as those who are foreign-born, whatever their citizenship at birth. In general, the foreign-born population is substantially larger than the share of foreign nationals. Immigrants offspring include different categories of people: ie. they can either be born in their parents' host country to two foreign-born parents, or to mixed parentage (one foreign-born parent), be foreign-born and arrived as children or be foreign-born and arrived as adults.

#### Further reading

- OECD (2016), *OECD International Migration Outlook*, OECD Publishing, Paris.
- OECD (2015), *OECD Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015, Settling In*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264234024-en>.
- OECD (2015), "Is this Humanitarian Migration Crisis Different?", *Migration Policy Debates*, No. 7, OECD, Paris, September, <https://www.oecd.org/migration/Is-this-refugee-crisis-different.pdf>.

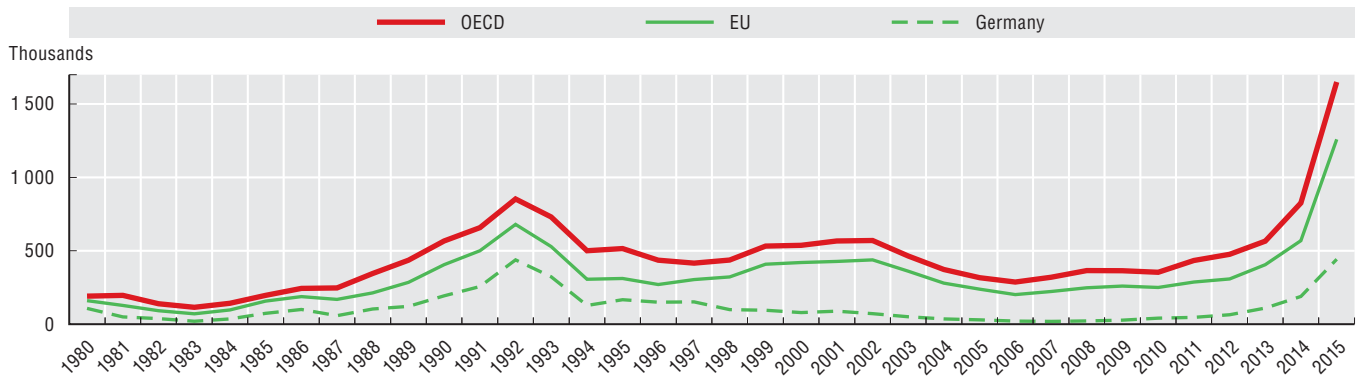
#### Figure notes

Figure 3.8: Data are not available for Greece. Data refer to 2000 or to the closest year with available data and to 2014 or most recent available year. OECD average refers to the average of countries presented. Data refers to foreign instead of foreign-born population for Japan and Korea.

Figure 3.9: The full split according to the categories of immigrants and immigrant offspring among 15-34 year-olds is not available for New Zealand. Data on foreign-born as a percentage of the total population are not available for Greece. OECD and EU averages refer to population weighted averages.

### 3.7. Unprecedented number of asylum seekers recorded in Europe

Number of new asylum seekers since 1980 in the OECD, the EU and Germany

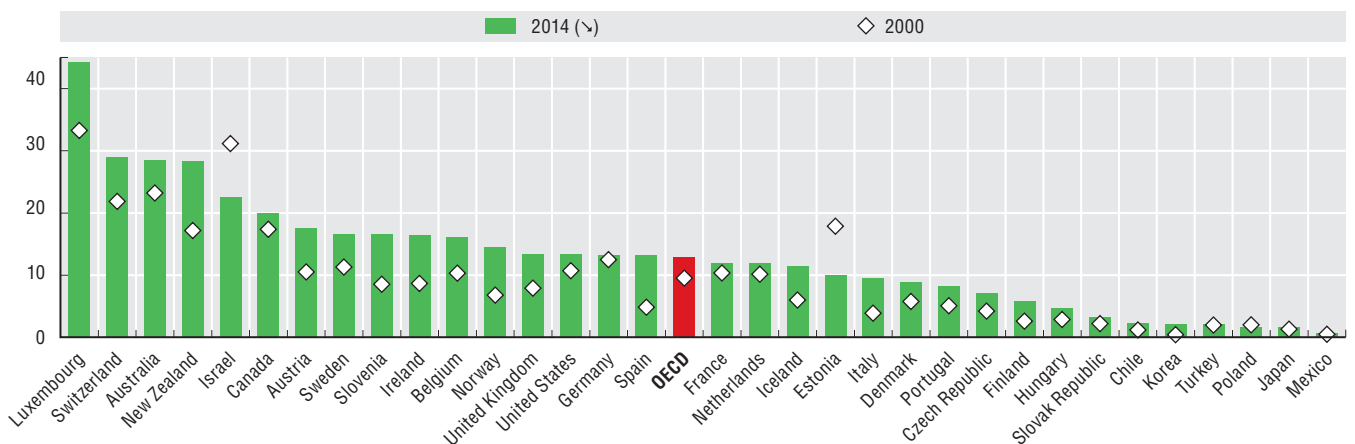


Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933405170>

### 3.8. On average in the OECD, 13% of the population is foreign-born

Foreign-born as a percentage of the total population, 2000 and 2014, percentages

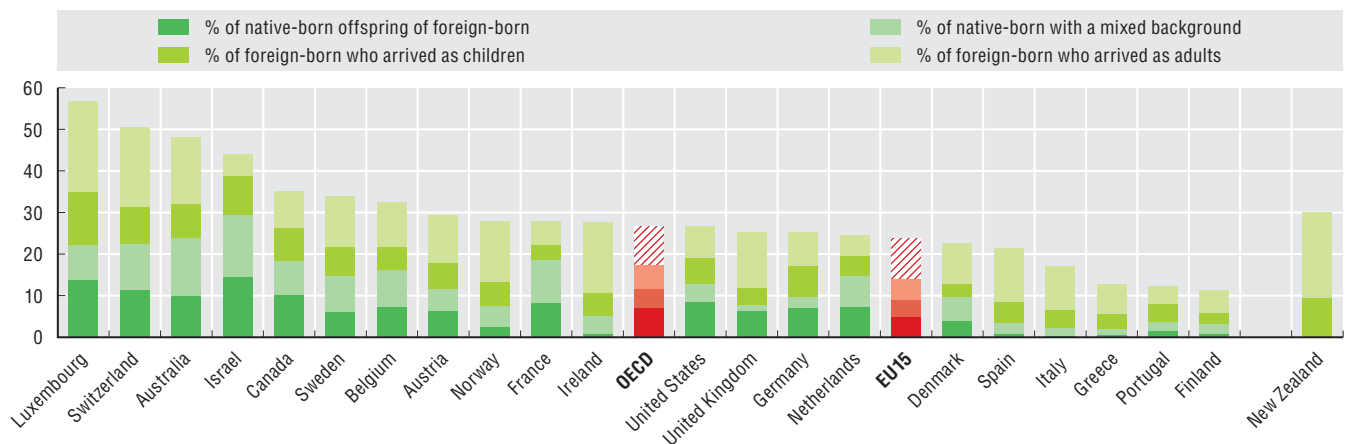


Source: OECD (2016), International Migration Outlook 2016 and OECD International Migration Database.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933405181>

### 3.9. One in four young people has a migrant background

Categories of immigrants and immigrant offspring among 15-34 year-olds, 2013, percentage of the population aged 15 to 34



Source: OECD (2015), OECD Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015, Settling In, OECD Publishing, Paris and the OECD International Migration Database.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933405197>



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