

# Editorial

Since the publication of the last joint EU-OECD report *Indicators of Immigrant Integration: Settling In* in 2018, major events have impacted migration and migration policy: COVID-19, the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which caused the greatest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War. We have seen unprecedented solidarity with Ukrainian refugees, around 4 million of which are now living in the EU alone, under the umbrella of the EU Temporary Protection Directive.

What remains constant is the fact that most migration is regular migration: close to 3 million people receive resident permits in the EU every year, as opposed to approximately 330 000 irregular arrivals in 2022. Across OECD countries, on average over the past decade, there were almost 5 million permanent inflows per year. Migrants help to fill skill gaps and contribute to the economy of host countries, and integration remains as vital as ever. At the EU level, the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 provides a framework for EU countries and other stakeholders to act together.

Monitoring the progress made on the integration of migrants and identifying the challenges that lie ahead is key. Over the past decade, the overall situation of migrants' integration has improved in many areas. This is the case, in particular, for integration in the labour market. Many OECD host countries have been facing in recent years significant labour shortages across a wide range of occupations and sectors. At the same time, newcomers tend to have higher educational attainment than before. But better integration policies have also contributed to these improvements. Integration, however, is multifaceted and goes beyond the integration of adults in the labour market. A further promising development is that the education outcomes of migrant children have improved. Participation of migrant children in pre-school has risen almost everywhere. This suggests that the situation is likely to further improve in the future. Also, settled migrants become more fluent in the local language the longer they stay in the host country. After 10 years of residence, immigrants who arrive for family or humanitarian reasons find employment at almost the same level as native-born people, despite the difficulties they faced in accessing the labour market when they first arrived.

But challenges remain. Despite all the positive developments in their labour market situation, immigrants still have lower employment rates than their native-born peers. If immigrants were to find employment as easily as the native-born, an additional 2.4 million people would work and contribute to the economy in the EU alone. Likewise, if immigrants' poverty levels were like those of the native-born, almost 10 million people would lift themselves out of poverty, OECD-wide. Furthermore, more than one in six immigrants live in overcrowded accommodation in the EU – a rate that is 70% higher than that of the native-born, and this gap has widened over the past decade. Particularly worrisome is that more migrants perceive that they are discriminated against now than was the case 10 years ago. This perception does not help their integration efforts into their new host societies.

Monitoring integration outcomes can help counter stereotypes. For example, the EU Special Eurobarometer shows that one in four people believe that the education outcomes of immigrants' children have declined over the past decade. But this is not the case: in most countries, at age 15, migrant children born in the host country have significantly better education outcomes (equivalent to around half a year of learning OECD-wide) than migrant children a decade earlier. In most EU countries, youth born in the country to migrant parents experienced a rise in employment over the past decade that was at least twice as high as among their peers with native-born parents.

The report showcases the need to better communicate the successes and continued challenges on migration and integration issues, and that a better-informed public debate can help. It also shows that a stronger focus on living conditions of migrants is crucial: progress is less visible in this area than in other areas, and this is an increasing concern in OECD countries.

Investing in integration and inclusion policies pays off: the evidence shows that integration is possible, and beneficial for migrants and their families, but also for our economies and societies; equally, failure to integrate is costly. The background of shrinking working populations and high labour shortages in many host countries means that further efforts are needed to integrate migrants and their families.

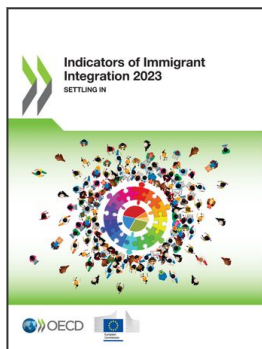
This third edition is a stepping stone towards better informed integration policies. The report can also facilitate co-operation both among countries and between national authorities and a large variety of stakeholders, especially in the EU context where initiatives already exist to promote such co-operation, such as the European Integration Network. The report also points to areas where further work would be particularly useful, for example the recognition of foreign qualifications, support for the transition from school to work, and tackling discrimination. By providing a comprehensive review of the key integration outcomes and challenges and highlighting the opportunities of good integration, we hope that it will provide a contribution to integration policies of EU and OECD countries.



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