Editorial

The issue of immigration and the integration of immigrants and their children are high on the policy agenda of EU and OECD countries, both from an economic and a social standpoint. The active participation of immigrants and their children in the labour market and, more generally, in public life is vital for ensuring social cohesion in the host country and the ability of migrants to function as autonomous, productive and successful, self-realised citizens. This is also critical for facilitating their acceptance by the host-country population.

Immigration and the integration of immigrants are also repeatedly mentioned as one of the main issues of concern in public opinion surveys in many countries. At the same time, there are many preconceptions about the actual integration outcomes of immigrants and their children. Against this backdrop, having reliable facts is a prerequisite for a better-informed public debate and for better targeted policy making.

To contribute to this aim, this publication presents the first broad international comparison across all EU and OECD countries of the outcomes for immigrants and their children. It covers all main areas of integration and includes a special focus on two concrete groups. The first group is that of young people with an immigrant background, whose outcomes are often seen as the benchmark for the success or failure of integration. Indeed, with growing numbers of young people with immigrant parents in virtually all countries, it is essential to better understand their economic and social integration, including the degree to which their outcomes may be attributable to the foreign origin of their parents.

The second group are third-country nationals in the European Union, who are the target of EU integration policy. The EU has identified key indicators that monitor the results of integration policies in the areas of employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship. Introduced at a ministerial conference under the Spanish presidency of the EU, in 2010, these indicators are now known as the “Zaragoza indicators” and are analysed in this publication for the first time for all EU countries – along with further indicators of integration.

The international comparisons of integration outcomes provide policy-makers with benchmarks so that they can compare results in their own country with those of other countries. They also reveal aspects of integration which national data often do not capture and allow comparing trends across countries which also helps to focus on the most relevant issues. These international comparisons are not intended to be used to rank countries, but rather to put into perspective the differences between them.
This publication identifies peer groups of countries with similar challenges so as to promote the exchange of experiences and practices. This should help countries to design better policies for the better integration of immigrants and their children − to the benefit of both host-country societies and immigrants themselves.

Indeed, successful integration means equal opportunities for immigrants, ensuring they become an integral part of society. In most countries, there is still some way to go to achieve this goal. We hope that the facts and figures in this report will help our countries to advance in the pursuit of this objective.

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