

Executive summary

International migration has rapidly grown and changed in composition in the last few decades. Countries of origin and destination have also become more diverse. Countries of destination have migration management and integration high in their policy agendas, while countries of origin put emphasis on protecting their citizens abroad and maintaining their bonds with them. The potential contribution that diasporas can make towards the development of their home countries is now fully acknowledged. The availability of high-quality and internationally comparable data on the size and characteristics of the migrant populations by country of origin is a prerequisite for proper analysis of migration as well as for the implementation of effective policies by countries on both sides of the migration phenomenon.

The objective of this publication is to draw the global profile of diasporas in the OECD area and in a number of non-OECD countries by country and region of origin. It aims at filling the data gap on diasporas by presenting a broad range of statistical information on migrant populations and trends over time by country and region of origin. The information is compiled from different OECD databases, notably the Database on Immigrants in OECD and non-OECD countries (DIOC and DIOC-E) as well as non-OECD data sources.

This publication is organised as follows. Chapter 1 presents the profile of today's diasporas, while Chapters 2-7 draw the profile of the diasporas of six regions or groups of countries: Asia and Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean, OECD countries, non-OECD European countries and Central Asia, Middle East and North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. The situation in each region is introduced by a separate chapter, which examines the recent trends in emigration from the region, the size and main characteristics of diasporas originating from the region and important elements of diasporas which determine their potential impact on their region and country of origin. It also discusses labour market outcomes in destination, including the impact of the economic crisis, the emigration of highly educated persons and the intentions to emigrate for the population of the region among others. Finally, each regional chapter is completed by a series of country notes and a regional note which provides detailed statistical information on diasporas and trends over time.

Key findings

- In 2010/11, there were 113 million migrants (all ages) in the OECD area. The number of migrants aged 15 and above in OECD countries increased by 40% between 2000/01 and 2010/11, reaching 106 million in 2010/11. The growth was particularly strong in the first half of the decade (24.5%), whereas it was lower in the second half of the 2000s (12%) because of the economic crisis that hit some of the main destinations and led to a decline in migration flows.

- Migration to the OECD is largely intra-regional: intra-OECD migration accounts for 41% of migrant stocks. However, diasporas of Asian countries such as China and India, are growing rapidly and constitute the largest diasporas, well ahead of some traditional OECD countries of origin, such as Germany and Italy.
- Migrants carry important skills. In 2010/11, there were 31 million tertiary educated migrants in the OECD, 13 million more than in 2000/01. The number of highly educated migrants from Asia almost doubled in ten years reaching 8.3 million in 2010/11. The size of the highly educated diaspora also grew sharply for Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and for non-OECD European and Central Asian countries.
- Emigration rates of the highly educated are on the rise but are still low for most countries. The risk of brain drain is higher for Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, while it is less of a concern for other regions. For many regions and countries, the rising educational attainment of their populations has mitigated the negative effects of the increasing numbers of their high-skilled emigrants and, as a result, the emigration rate of their highly educated population increased only slightly or remained constant between 2000/01 and 2010/11.
- International students constitute an important and growing group of highly educated migrants. In 2012, there were 2.7 million international students in the OECD, up from 2.2 million in 2008. Students from Asia and Oceania represent 40% of all international students and China and India are the top countries of origin with jointly 800 000 international students in OECD countries.
- In 2010/11, 31.3 million migrants were living in the 51 non-OECD destinations covered by this publication. Non-OECD European countries and countries in Central Asia host more than half of these migrants, with the Russian Federation being the top destination. Similarly to migration to the OECD, migration to these non-OECD destinations is also broadly intra-regional migration.
- Migrants in the OECD area have seen substantial improvements in their labour market outcomes in the past decade, but the economic crisis reverted this positive trend for some of them. Migrants from Latin America and MENA, as well as low-educated migrants were more heavily hurt than other migrants because they were working in countries and sectors which were particularly affected by the economic crisis.
- According to recent data from the Gallup World Poll Survey, one in five persons in the 150 countries covered by the data, or more than 406 million persons, would like to move permanently abroad if they had the opportunity. Men, youth, the more educated and wealthier persons are more likely to express their desire to emigrate, as also are those with friends and families abroad.



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