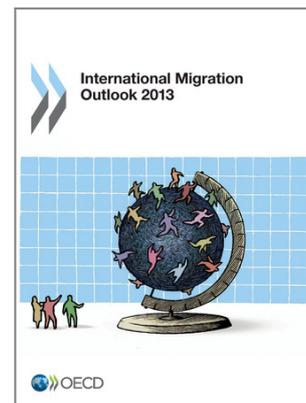


OECD *Multilingual Summaries*

International Migration Outlook 2013

Summary in English



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MAIN TRENDS

- Immigration flows are rising in OECD countries, but remain well below pre-crisis levels. In 2011, total permanent immigration rose overall in OECD countries from 2010, but was still below four million. Preliminary 2012 data suggest a further increase. Temporary labour migration was essentially stagnant relative to 2010, at just below two million entries. OECD countries continue to attract students from around the world, with the number of international students in 2010 up 6% on 2009.
- India and China continue to be important origin countries for immigration into OECD countries, but Poland and Romania appear this year among the top three (after China) because of increased intra-EU mobility. Free circulation within European OECD countries rose in 2011 and is now four times more common in relative terms in the region than migration from elsewhere. Outflows from countries most affected by the crisis, particularly southern European ones, have also accelerated, by 45% from 2009 to 2011.
- In 2011, the number of persons seeking asylum in OECD countries rose by more than one-fifth, exceeding 400 000 for the first time since 2003. This trend is confirmed by preliminary 2012 data. The top destination countries are the United States, France and Germany. Largely due to the “Arab Spring”, Italy emerged as the fourth-largest receiving country in 2011.
- Many governments have become more restrictive towards foreign recruitment, seeking to protect their workforces in face of rising unemployment. However, countries have also introduced measures to ease the situation for foreign workers who have lost their jobs, mainly by allowing them to stay and search for work. More countries are adopting points-based systems, because of the flexibility they provide in the selection of high-skilled candidates. Programmes to attract investors and entrepreneurs are also receiving attention.
- Migrants’ labour market situation has worsened over the past years, both in terms of levels and compared with the native-born. On average, the unemployment rate of the foreign-born has increased by 5 percentage points between 2008 and 2012, compared with 3 percentage points for the native-born. Long-term unemployment of migrants is becoming a serious challenge in many OECD countries. In 2012, almost one out of two unemployed migrants had looked for a job for over a year.
- Immigrant youth and the low-skilled have been particularly affected by the crisis, but women and high-skilled migrants less so. The impact was strongest on migrants from Latin America and North Africa. Migrants from North Africa in Europe, for example, faced a record high unemployment of 26.6% in 2012.
- The emphasis on and public funds devoted to integration policies vary substantially across countries, despite a common need to support migrants’ labour market integration in order to avoid possible long-lasting effects, notably on young migrants and native-born children of immigrants. Some countries continued to invest significant public resources in integration initiatives, while others cut back substantially due to the economic recession and fiscal constraints.

The fiscal impact of immigration

The question whether immigrants are net contributors to or a net drain on public finances is widely debated. Estimates suggest their impact is small, generally not exceeding 0.5% of GDP in either positive or negative terms. However, immigrants usually have a less favourable net fiscal position than the native-born, largely because they tend to pay less in taxes and social security contributions and not because of a higher dependence on social benefits.

Immigrants' age profile is an important factor in explaining cross-country differences in immigrants' net fiscal position, and age at arrival is a key element in determining the net present value of immigrants' discounted future net direct fiscal contributions. Despite this, in most migration systems for the selection of labour migrants, age plays a relatively minor role compared with other factors such as work experience, language and education. More generally, differences in the composition of the migrant population by migration category (labour, family, humanitarian) account for a large part of the cross-country variation of migrants' fiscal position relative to that of the native-born.

Employment is the single most important determinant of migrants' net fiscal contribution, particularly in generous welfare states. Raising immigrants' employment rate to that of the native born would entail substantial fiscal benefits for many European OECD economies.

Discrimination against immigrants

Discrimination against migrants and their children in the labour market and society can damage social cohesion and reduce incentives to invest in education. It can also represent an economic loss to the host country. Measuring discrimination is difficult, but studies suggest that, in order to get invited to a job interview, it is not uncommon for immigrants and their children to have to send more than twice as many applications as persons without a migration background who have otherwise equivalent CVs. Indeed, the biggest impact of discrimination seems to be in the hiring process, although it can also affect subsequent career advancement and wages.

Most OECD countries have taken measures to combat discrimination, although scale and scope vary widely. Most common are legal remedies. A number of OECD countries have also applied "affirmative action"-type policies based on targets and quotas as well as instruments such as anonymous CVs. The evidence suggests that these can effectively combat discrimination, if carefully designed. Diversity policy instruments have also been tested in a number of OECD countries. It is difficult to assess their effectiveness, since it is generally employers who are most interested in diversity who participate. Awareness raising seems particularly important to overcome negative stereotypes, which seems to be a key driver of discriminatory behaviour.

Key findings

- Immigration accounted for 40% of total population growth in the OECD area over the period 2001-2011.
- Permanent immigration to OECD countries increased 2% in 2011. Preliminary figures show a similar increase in 2012.
- Immigration in the context of free movement in Europe has rebounded to 15% in 2011 after a decline of almost 40% during the crisis (2007-10).
- In Europe, fewer than one out of two immigrant workers are recruited from abroad.
- The number of international students is constantly increasing and exceeded 2.6 million in 2010.
- The share of Asian migrants in migration flows to OECD countries continues to increase, reaching 36% in 2011. This places Asia close behind Europe as a continent of origin.
- The number of asylum seekers in OECD countries increased by more than 20% in 2011 and 7% in 2012.
- Ten new countries have implemented the EU Directive on the EU Blue Card in 2012; it is now issued by all signatory countries.
- In 2011 and 2012, seven OECD countries modified their system to attract international graduate students into their labour markets.
- On average in OECD countries, immigrants have been more affected by rising unemployment than natives, with immigrant unemployment rate going from 8.1% in 2008 to 12.9% in 2012 against a rise from 5.4% to 8.7% for natives.

- Between 2008 and 2012, the proportion of immigrants unemployed for over a year among the unemployed immigrants rose from 31% to 44% in OECD countries.

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