



6.13 Foreign labor and population in OECD countries

	Foreign population ^a				Foreign labor force ^b		Inflows of foreign population			
	thousands		% of total population		% of total labor force		Total thousands ^c		Asylum seekers thousands	
	1990	1997	1990	1997	1990	1997	1990	1997	1990	1997
Austria	456 ^d	733	5.9	9.1	7.4	9.9	..	..	23 ^e	7
Belgium	905	903	9.1	8.9	..	7.9	51	49	13	12
Denmark	161	250	3.1	4.7	2.4	..	15	..	5	5
Finland	26	81	0.5	1.6	..	..	7	8	3	1
France	3,597 ^f	3,597 ^f	6.3	..	6.2	6.1	102 ^g	102	55	21
Germany	5,343 ^h	7,366	8.4	9.0	7.1	..	842	615	193	104
Ireland	80 ⁱ	114 ^j	2.3	3.1	2.6	3.4	..	..	0	4
Italy	781 ^k	1,241 ^l	1.4	..	..	..	..	..	5 ^f	2 ^f
Japan	1,075 ^k	1,483 ^k	0.9	1.2	..	0.2	224	275	..	..
Luxembourg	113	148	29.4	34.9	45.2	55.1	9	10	0	0
Netherlands	692	678	4.6	..	3.1	2.9	81	77	21	34
Norway	143 ^l	158	3.4	3.6	2.3	2.8	16	22	4	2
Portugal	108 ^m	175 ^m	1.1	1.8	1.0	1.8	..	..	0	0
Spain	279 ⁿ	609 ⁿ	0.7	1.5	0.6	1.1	..	..	9 ^f	5 ^f
Sweden	484	522	5.6	6.0	5.4	5.2	53	33	29	10
Switzerland	1,100 ^o	1,341 ^o	16.3	19.0	18.9	17.5	101	73	36	24
United Kingdom	1,723	2,066	3.2	3.6	3.3	3.6	..	237	38 ^p	42

	Foreign-born population ^a				Foreign-born labor force ^a		Inflows of foreign population			
	thousands		% of total population		% of total labor force		Total thousands		Asylum seekers thousands	
	1990	1997	1990	1997	1990	1997	1990	1997	1990	1997
Australia	3,753	3,908	22.3	21.1	25.7	24.8	121	86	4 ^s	9 ^s
Canada	4,343	4,971	16.1	17.4	18.5	18.5 ^t	214	216	37	23
United States ^u	19,767	25,779	7.9	9.7	9.4	11.6	1,537	798	74	80

a. Except for France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom, data are from population registers. Unless otherwise noted, they refer to the population on 31 December of the years indicated. b. Data include the unemployed except for Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom. Data for Austria, Germany, and Luxembourg are from social security registers, those for Denmark from the register of population, and those for Norway from the register of employees. Data for Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland are from residence or work permits. Figures for Japan and the Netherlands are estimates from national statistical offices. For other countries data are from labor force surveys. c. Data are from population registers except for France (census), Ireland and the United Kingdom (labor force survey), Japan and Switzerland (register of foreigners), and Italy, Portugal, and Spain (residence permits). d. Annual average. e. Data do not include de facto refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. f. Data are from the 1990 population census. g. Excludes accompanying dependents. h. Data refer to the Federal Republic of Germany before unification. i. Estimated from the annual labor force survey. j. Data are adjusted to take account of the regularizations in 1987–88 and 1990 and regularization programs in 1995–96. k. Data refer to registered foreign nationals, who include foreigners staying in Japan for more than 90 days. l. Includes asylum seekers whose requests are being processed. m. Includes all foreigners who hold a valid residence permit. n. Data refer to foreigners with a residence permit. Those with permits for fewer than six months and students are excluded. o. Data refer to foreigners with an annual residence permit or with a settlement permit (permanent permit). p. Data are adjusted to include dependents. q. Data are from the latest population census. r. Data are from labor force surveys except for Canada and the United States, for which data are from the latest population census. s. Data refer to principal applicants and do not include dependents. t. Data are from the latest population census. u. Data refer to the fiscal year (October to September).



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About the data

The data in the table are based on national definitions and data collection practices and are not fully comparable across countries. Japan and the European members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have traditionally defined foreigners by nationality of descent. Australia, Canada, and the United States use place of birth, which is closer to the concept used in the United Nations' definition of the immigrant stock. Few countries, however, apply just one criterion in all circumstances. For this and other reasons, data based on the concept of foreign nationality and data based on the concept of foreign-born cannot be completely reconciled. See the notes to the table for other breaks in comparability between countries and over time.

Data on the size of the foreign labor force are also problematic. Countries use different permit systems

to gather information on immigrants. Some countries issue a single permit for residence and work, while others issue separate residence and work permits. Differences in immigration laws across countries, particularly with respect to immigrants' access to the labor market, greatly affect the recording and measurement of migration and reduce the comparability of raw data at the international level. The data exclude temporary visitors and tourists (see table 6.14).

OECD countries are not the only ones that receive substantial migration flows. Migrant workers make up a significant share of the labor force in Gulf countries and in southern Africa, and people are displaced by wars and natural disasters throughout the world. Systematic recording of migration flows is difficult, however, especially in poor countries and those affected by civil disorder.

Definitions

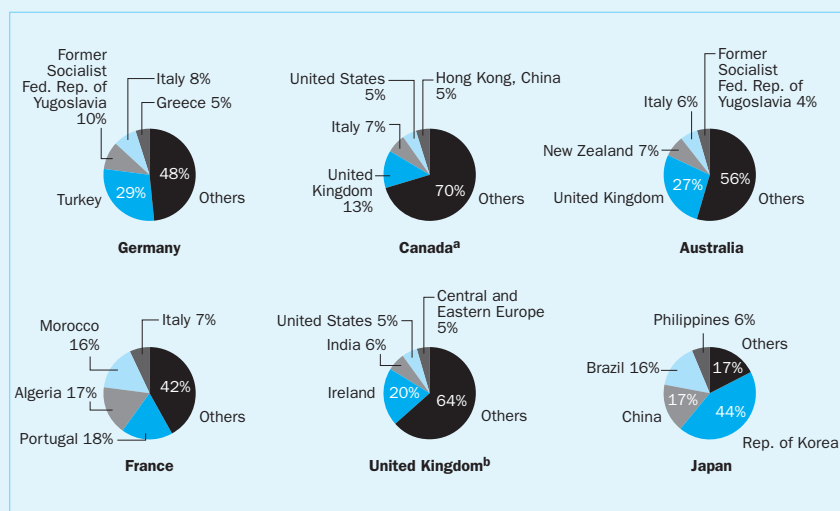
- **Foreign (or foreign-born) population** is the number of foreign or foreign-born residents in a country.
- **Foreign (or foreign-born) labor force as a percentage of total labor force** is the share of foreign or foreign-born workers in a country's workforce.
- **Inflows of foreign population** are the gross arrivals of immigrants in the country shown. The total does not include asylum seekers, except as noted.
- **Asylum seekers** are those who apply for permission to remain in the country for humanitarian reasons.

Data sources

International migration data are collected by the OECD through information provided by national correspondents to the Continuous Reporting System on Migration (SOPEMI) network, which provides an annual overview of trends and policies. The data appear in the OECD's *Trends in International Migration 1999*.

Figure 6.13

The nationalities of the foreign population in OECD countries in 1997 reflected traditional ties and recent events



a. Data refer to 1996.
 b. Data refer to 1998.
 Source: OECD.

A country's stock of foreign population grows through the arrival of immigrants over many years. It reflects the geographical and cultural connections between countries as well as political and economic events.