

## Germany

Long-term migration inflows rose slightly in 2007 to about 574 800, compared to 558 500 in 2006, a small halt in the long trend towards lower long-term migration since its peak at 788 300 in 1995. As in previous years, the majority of immigrants (74%) came from Europe. Within the migration from EU countries (58% of total inflow) a negative net migration from the old EU-member states (EU-14) can be observed since 2001, whereas a surplus characterizes the net migration from new EU-states (EU-12). The significant decrease of inflows from non-EU-countries is explained by the reclassification of Bulgarian and Romanian as from the EU.

At the end of 2007 around 6.7 million foreigners resided in Germany, constituting about 8.2% of the total population. Turkey was the largest source country (25%). In flows, however, the most continue to be Poles, although increases were seen in Romanians and Bulgarians. Traditional recruitment countries, such as Turkey, Italy or Greece, are of declining importance.

Regarding migration motives, family migration decreased from 50 300 in 2006 to 42 200 in 2007, including ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union (this category was half of Russians in 2006, but only a quarter in 2007). Categories where increases were seen in 2007 were EU free movement (up 17 300 to 103 300, accounting for 57% of total inflow) and employment (up 3 300 to 16 300).

In temporary migration, the number of seasonal workers increased by 60 000 to 355 300 from 2006 to 2007, exceeding the annual average of 304 400 in the period of 2000-2007. Most (76%) seasonal workers come from Poland, followed by Romania (19%), which has doubled its numbers since 2004.

The number of asylum seekers declined to 19 200 in 2007, continuing a 20-year trend influenced both by stabilization in Eastern Europe, reforms in Turkey and reform of the Asylum Act. Asian asylum seekers comprised 54% of all applicants in 2007 (compared to 43% in 2006), while Europeans decreased from 35% to 26%. The rapid increase of Asian applicants is largely due to a doubling of asylum applications from Iraqis.

Germany decided in August 2008 to extend the transitional period for the free movement of workers from the EU-8 countries until 30 April 2011, and to maintain restrictions on access to the German labour market for Bulgarians and Romanians until the end of 2011. The restriction also applies to certain sectors, such as the construction and affiliated industry, industrial cleaning and interior decorating. Highly skilled migrants from new EU states are exempt from these regulations, and have, since 1 January 2009, enjoyed free access to the labour market without prior priority checks.

Germany high-skilled migration policy aims to facilitate migration and employment of highly qualified foreigners, through measures introduced by the Immigration Act of 2005 and supplemented in 2007. However, few have actually acquired the settlement permit for the highly qualified introduced in 2005: by the end of 2007, about 1 300 foreigners had received this permit, and only 151 of them immigrated in 2007.

On 1 January 2009, the July 2008 action program "Contribution towards securing the skilled labour basis in Germany by labour immigration" came into effect. The income threshold for granting unlimited residence (settlement) was lowered from EUR 86 400 to 64 800. Residence permit for employment as a skilled worker can now be granted to foreigners whose deportation had been suspended if they complete vocational training or studies, or work in a job that requires three years of vocation training, or in a job corresponding to a university education abroad.

Prior labour market tests have been removed for the university graduates and their family members, and graduates from German schools abroad, as well as workers in specific skill categories and their spouses.

Federal, regional and municipal governments and non-governmental civil actors agreed on a National Integration Plan in July 2007, with 400 measures and commitments, including expansion and improvement of integration courses, integration of migrants into the labour market, stimulation of "ethnic economies", language support and stronger early intervention policies for children of immigrants.

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