

## Greece

Flow data for Greece are difficult to obtain, and permanent and temporary migrants in Greece cannot be distinguished. Nevertheless, the Labour Force Survey in mid-2007 indicated that that 580 711 foreigners lived in Greece. According to the Ministry of Public Administration and Decentralization, 481 501 residence permissions were valid at 15 October 2007. 60% of them were for employment and 36% were for family reasons. In the first half of the year 2007, most immigrants living in Greece (61.3%) were Albanians.

Immigration in Greece contributes considerably to total population growth. While annual growth of the Greek population was negative in 2007 (-0.3%), the foreign population in Greece increased by 12.7%.

The Labour Force Survey shows that the share of migrants of the population is highest among people aged zero to 44, where they represent between 6 and 10% of the population. Since 1998, the share of migrants in the Greek population has increased by 2.1%.

According to the Labour Force Survey, about 450 000 migrants of working age were registered in the first half of 2007, accounting for approximately 7% of the Greek labour force. Moreover, the numbers show that the share of migrants in the Greek labour force increased by approximately 1.7 percentage points since 1998 and 4.3 points since 1993. The labour force participation rate of foreign men and women varies significantly: 90% of foreign men are in the labour force, compared to only 60% for women. In 2007, 54% of all employed foreign men over 14 worked in construction. Foreign women worked most frequently in private households (43%).

An estimated 50% of migrants are illegally employed.

The employment – population ratio was about 10% higher for foreign-born men (84.5%) than for native-born men (74.1%), but almost the same for women: (foreign-born: 49.2% vs. 47.7% native-born). Employment rates were increasing through 2007.

The unemployment rate for foreign-born and native-born men was the same, about 5%. In contrast, while 12.8% native-born women were unemployed, 14.3% of foreign-born women did not have a job. The decreasing trend of the previous years continued. 11% of foreign men of working age were inactive in the first half of 2007, half the Greek rate, while the non-participation rate (about 45%) was almost identical for Greek and foreign men.

According to the Interior Ministry, Greece detained more than 146 000 illegal immigrants in 2008. This is an increase of 30% over 2007 and 54% over 2006. In 2009, the government expanded the detention-center system, and extended the maximum duration of detention to 12 months.

The number of asylum seekers in Greece continued to grow in 2008, as Greece is increasingly the first European country entered by asylum applicants. UNHCR, however, reports that out of about 33 000 asylum applications in 2008 only 1% was approved.

In 2008 a reform was passed to grant long-term residence to the children of migrants. However, since strict prerequisites have to be fulfilled, as well as a fee of EUR 900, there were only three applicants out of more than 80 000 potential beneficiaries.

In 2007, the immigration law was amended to simplify bureaucratic procedures should be simplified and facilitate legalization. The amendments also aimed to improve compliance with employment insurance and improve social integration of migrants. In 2008, with EU funding, the Greek government implemented an Integrated Action Programme (IAP), “ESTIA”, aimed at enhancing social integration of permanent immigrants from third countries.

For further information:

[www.imepo.gr](http://www.imepo.gr)  
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