

Portugal

Migration inflows in Portugal in 2007 were 32 600, a 48% increase over 2006. While Brazil remained the main source country (15%), its share was 8% less than the average over the previous decade. Cape Verde rose to 12.5% of flows, and about 12% came from the United Kingdom, an increase of 10 percentage points. The share of Ukrainians, who had represented one in five immigrants over the previous decade, declined to 6%.

The total stock of foreign population has been increasing, from 430 000 in 2005 to 437 000 (2006) and 446 333 (2007). The more recent rise has been largely due to citizens of the EU, especially Romanians (+61.1%). The number of Brazilians or the Cape Verdeans have fallen (-5.7% and -4.7, respectively), although they remain the main foreign groups (15.6% and 14.6%, respectively), followed by Ukrainians (9%).

Permanent inflows, which include changes of status among temporary immigrants, rose 68.5% to 42 300. The proportion of permanent permits issued for employment rose from 28.7% to 43.9%, while family reunification was less important (32.5%). Free movement accounted for 23% of the flow in 2007.

The total number of long term visas issued to non-EU citizens slightly increased from 20 039 in 2006 to 21 082 in 2007, of which about 25% were issued for work reasons, 30% for family, and 24% for study. Brazilians (23.6%) and Cape-Verdeans (19.4%) were the principal recipients.

The number of new residence permits for EU citizens, excluding Romania and Bulgaria, jumped from 2 400 to 11 500 in 2007, dominated by the United Kingdom (about 1/3 of the increase), followed by Germany (14.2%) and Spain (12.5%).

According to Labour Force Survey data, employment rates were 6% higher for foreign-born than native-born, for both sexes. 79.5% of foreign-born men and 67.1% of foreign-born females were employed in 2007. The unemployment rate was 7.0% for native born and 7.3% for foreign-born men. The difference was larger for women (9.9% vs. 12.1%).

Compared to the previous year, no large differences can be observed. However, in April 2009, immigrant unemployment increased 50 % over 2008, in absolute numbers as well as in the unemployment rate.

On December 14 2006, the nationality law approved in April 2006 entered into force. It facilitates acquisition of Portuguese nationality, reducing the residence requirement for foreigners coming from non-Portuguese speaking countries from 10 to 6 years of continuous formal residence, and allowing naturalisation due to attendance of basic schooling in Portugal. The rise in acquisition of Portuguese citizenship since 2005 is likely due to this law. In 2007, 6 020 people gained Portuguese citizenship, an increase of 640% over 2005.

The number of PALOP (Portuguese-speaking African countries) citizens that obtained Portuguese nationality between 2006 and 2007 doubled, from 2447 to 5 132, and accounts for 85% of naturalisations. This contributes to reduce the stock of foreigners from some Portuguese-speaking countries, as they become Portuguese nationals.

In 2007, a new law on “Entry, Stay, Departure and Expulsion of Foreigners” was introduced, transposing a set of EU directives (on Family Reunion, the Status of long-term third-country residents, and the permits granted to victims of human trafficking that cooperate with national authorities). In addition to these elements, the new law simplified the visa system through the introduction of two basic titles – the Temporary Stay Visa and the Residence Visa. The latter includes sub-types of visa: for employment (researchers, self-employed, contract workers), family reunion, training, study, etc.) and replaced the former strict quotas of labour migration needs segmented by activity branches. Portugal establishes an orientative target for labour migration, set at 8 500 in 2008. In May 2009 Portugal halved this orientative target to 3 800 for 2009. However, only 3 300 foreign workers were requested by employers. The new law also expanded eligibility for case-by-case regularisation.

About 30% of the long term visas attributed in 2007 were already under the new legal framework. Approximately 12 000 people used the new dispositions to regularize their situation between July 2007 and July 2008.

Concerning asylum seekers, levels continued to be low, despite the increase observed from 2006 (123 claims) to 2007 (222 claims).