

### Turkey

Information on migration statistics in Turkey is scarce and of poor quality. There is no direct information on the flows into and out of the country from a reliable source.

The Ministry of Labour of Social Security (MLSS) provides information on contract-dependent temporary migrants. The number of those workers sent abroad by the Turkish Employment Office in 2007 was 78 167, similar to 2006 but much higher than in the previous years. Around 46% of those went to the Commonwealth of Independent States, and 31% went to Middle Eastern countries. This figure, however, does not include flows due to emigration for employment outside the contract worker system, family reunification, marriage migration or asylum-seeking.

Family-related migration flows continued to be important due to sizeable Turkish migrant communities abroad. There has been, however, a continuous decline, and in 2007 they were estimated to fall under 50 000, well below the figure of around 100 000 in the mid-1990s.

In 2007 the number of immigrants in Turkey that were granted residence permits was around 184,000, a similar figure to the previous year. A significant proportion of immigrants came from Turkish-speaking populations from neighbouring countries. In addition, there were significant irregular migration flows of clandestine workers, transit migrants and rejected asylum seekers. Transit migrants came to Turkey mainly from the Middle East (Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan) and from Asia and Africa. A total of 64 000 irregular migrants were apprehended in 2007 in Turkey. This trend seems to be increasing, since a record number of illegal crossings from Turkey into Greece by third-country nationals was recorded in 2008.

The number of Turkish asylum seekers to Europe continued to decline and it reached in 2007 its lowest level in the last two decades (6 500 individuals). Conversely, the number of asylum seekers in Turkey suffered a considerable increase in 2007, reaching 7 600 applications (an amount 70 per cent higher than the previous year). Most of this increase was due to the growth in the number of Iraqis applying for asylum, which corresponded to almost half of all the applications in 2007. The number of applications was almost 14 000 in 2008.

Remittances increased by 10% in 2007, reaching USD 1.2 billion. However, they were greatly surpassed by ‘luggage trade’ made by migrants to Turkey that reached USD 6 billion.

In the policy domain, Turkey continues to adapt its international migration and asylum legislation in order to harmonize it with the EU *acquis*. The Law on Asylum and the Law on Aliens should be concluded in 2012, in order to coincide with the country’s negotiation for EU membership.

Progress has been limited regarding new policies and practices, for example regarding the decentralization of asylum procedures. Nevertheless, a bilateral readmission agreement with Syria, signed in 2001, was ratified and negotiations were in process for bilateral readmission agreements with Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Jordan, Uzbekistan, Lebanon and Libya.

#### **For further information:**

[www.iskur.gov.tr](http://www.iskur.gov.tr)

[www.tuik.gov.tr](http://www.tuik.gov.tr)

[http://www.nvi.gov.tr/English,En\\_Html.html](http://www.nvi.gov.tr/English,En_Html.html)