

Ireland



Immigration to Ireland continued its strong growth path in 2006. Long-term (over one year) migration of foreign nationals was about 89 000. This represents an increase of more than one third over

2005, which was already the highest immigration on record. Preliminary figures for 2007 show, however, a stagnation at this high level.

Together with Sweden and the United Kingdom, Ireland was the only EU15 member country which had fully opened its labour market for immigrants from all ten new EU member countries at the time of accession. According to survey data, nationals from the EU25 accounted for more than 88% of the employment growth of non-Irish workers in the post-enlargement period up to the second quarter of 2006. The bulk of the labour immigrants from the EU25 were nationals of the new member States (EU8). These currently account for almost half of the foreign workforce in Ireland, compared with 17% in the third quarter of 2004. In comparison to other migrant workers, new member State nationals are over represented in lower skilled sectors of the economy such as agriculture, other production industries, construction and wholesale and retail trade. In light of the significant inflows following the 2004 EU enlargement, the Irish government decided not to give free access to nationals of Romania and Bulgaria following accession of these countries in January 2007.

Asylum seeking remained constant in 2006, but preliminary figures for 2007 again show a significant decline in the order of 10%, to fall below 4 000 for the first time since 1997 and representing only about one-third of the 2002 peak.

There were a number of significant changes in legislation in 2007, starting with the new Employment Permit Act which entered into force in January 2007. Among the key changes were the introduction of a so-called “Green Card” for highly-skilled employees in most occupations with an annual salary above 60 000 euros, and in a restricted number of occupations in sectors with skills shortages in a salary range between EUR 30 000 and EUR 60 000. Applicants do not need to pass a labour

market test and are entitled to bring their family with them. The card is issued for two years, after which holders can apply for permanent residence. Almost 3 000 Green Cards were issued in 2007.

In April 2007, the Third Level Graduate Scheme was implemented providing that non-EEA students who graduated on or after 1 January 2007 with a degree from an Irish third-level educational institution may be permitted to remain in Ireland for six months. The scheme allows them to find employment and apply for a work permit or Green Card permit. During this six-month period they may work full time.

The draft of an Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill was published in early 2008. The bill, when enacted, will replace all of the previous legislation on immigration by an integrated statutory framework for the development and implementation of immigration policy. The proposed bill creates the new status of long-term resident. This will be available for immigrants who have had at least five years residence in Ireland (periods as asylum-seeker or short-term student will not be considered) and brings access to the labour market and to state-funded services and benefits on an equal footing with Irish citizens. There will also be provisions to speed up entitlement, notably for certain groups of migrants which Ireland seeks to attract – including Green Card holders.

The bill will also transpose the EU asylum procedures directive, concerning minimum standards on procedures for granting and withdrawing refugee states, into national law. This includes a single asylum procedure, meaning that Geneva Convention asylum claims and subsidiary protection claims would be examined together.

After the General Election of June 2007, a new Minister of State for Integration Policy was appointed. A total of EUR 9 million was allocated to the new Office of the Minister for Integration in the Budget for 2008.

For further information...

www.inis.gov.ie/

www.entemp.ie/labour/workpermits/

www.ria.gov.ie/

Flow data on foreigners

Migration flows (foreigners) National definition	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)															
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006															
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>																						
Inflows	3.8	7.3	16.0	21.0	5.9	12.8	88.9															
Outflows															
Migration inflows (foreigners) by type Permit based statistics (standardised)	Thousands		% distribution		Inflows by nationality as a % of total inflows of foreigners																	
	2005	2006	2005	2006																		
Work																		
Family (incl. accompanying family)																		
Humanitarian																		
Free movements																		
Others																		
Total																		
..																		
Temporary migration	2000	2005	2006	Annual average	Inflows of asylum seekers																	
				2000-2006																		
<i>Thousands</i>																						
International students	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Average</th> <th>Level ('000)</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>1995-2000</th> <th>2001-2006</th> <th>2006</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Per 1 000 inhabitants</td> <td>0.1</td> <td>2.9</td> <td>1.0</td> <td>1.0</td> <td>1.3</td> <td>1.8</td> <td>4.3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Average	Level ('000)		1995-2000	2001-2006	2006	Per 1 000 inhabitants	0.1	2.9	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.8	4.3
	Average	Level ('000)																				
	1995-2000	2001-2006	2006																			
Per 1 000 inhabitants	0.1	2.9	1.0	1.0				1.3	1.8	4.3												
Trainees																		
Working holiday makers																		
Seasonal workers																		
Intra-company transfers																		
Other temporary workers																		

Macroeconomic, demographic and labour market indicators

Macroeconomic indicators	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006
Real GDP (growth, %)	9.6	9.4	6.0	5.7	9.5	5.4	
GDP/capita (growth, %) – level in US Dollars	9.2	8.0	3.7	3.1	8.3	3.4	35 290
Employment (growth, %) – level in thousands	4.9	4.8	4.7	4.4	5.4	3.2	2 039
Unemployment (% of labour force)	12.5	4.3	4.4	4.4	8.8	4.4	
Components of population growth	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)
					1995-2000	2001-2006	
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
Total	6.4	14.5	23.9	..	10.6	18.7	
Natural increase	4.7	6.1	8.1	..	5.5	7.9	
Net migration	1.6	8.4	15.9	..	5.1	10.7	
Total population	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006
<i>(Annual growth %)</i>							
Native-born	..	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.8	3 633
Foreign-born	..	7.4	12.4	14.3	6.9	11.1	602
National	..	1.1	1.3	..	0.9	1.2	..
Foreign	..	7.2	16.4	..	5.6	13.7	..
Naturalisations	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006
<i>As a percentage of foreign population</i>							
..
Labour market outcomes	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)
					1995-2000	2001-2006	
<i>Employment/population ratio</i>							
Native-born men	66.9	75.8	75.8	76.7	70.5	75.6	
Foreign-born men	65.0	74.5	78.8	80.9	69.6	76.9	
Native-born women	41.3	53.1	58.0	58.7	46.9	56.2	
Foreign-born women	42.0	55.6	57.5	59.9	49.0	56.5	
<i>Unemployment rate</i>							
Native-born men	12.0	4.4	4.5	4.4	8.6	4.5	
Foreign-born men	16.5	5.3	5.8	6.0	10.6	5.9	
Native-born women	11.9	4.1	3.6	3.8	8.1	3.7	
Foreign-born women	15.0	5.9	6.4	6.0	10.2	5.5	

Notes and sources are at the beginning of the Chapter.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/434222200871>