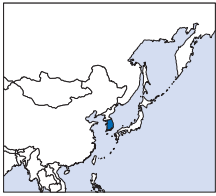


Korea



Long term inflows of foreigners to Korea reached about 315 000 in 2006. This corresponds to an increase of almost 20% compared to 2005, and a two-thirds increase compared to 2004.

Net long term migration of foreigners amounted to 132 000 in 2006, one of the highest figures ever recorded.

Foreign students is one of the categories of inflows which have increased the most in recent years. In 2006, there were 30 000 foreign students in Korea, a 50% increase compared to 2005 and more than four times the 2002 figure. Family migration also remained important. International marriages represented 12% of all marriages in 2006 (14% in 2005). This has to be seen in the context of less than 2% foreigners in the total population.

Migration of foreign workers is also gaining importance in Korea, in response to major changes in labour migration management. The Industrial Trainee Scheme which was introduced in 1993, and under which foreign (low-skilled) employees were employed as trainees, was terminated in January 2007. It was replaced by the Employment Permit System, which had been gradually phased in since 2004. Under the Employment Permit System, foreign workers can work for up to three years in Korea but must return to their origin country afterwards. Those who leave Korea after working for three years can re-enter and work for another three years after six months from their departure. Measures are planned to facilitate the reemployment process.

Foreign workers under the EPS are treated equally as domestic workers. Unlike workers under the previous Industrial Trainee System, they are protected by labour laws such as the Labor Standards Act, Minimum Wage Act, Industrial Safety and Health Act and their basic labour rights are guaranteed.

The Employment Permit System was extended in March 2007 to allow ethnic Koreans aged 25 years and above who are living in China and the former USSR with no connection to Korea to work in Korea for up to three years. Ethnic Koreans have to pass a language test and gain a visa through a lottery system whilst Ethnic Koreans who have relatives or connections in Korea can enter with a Visit Cohabitation Visa.

The number of available work permits is controlled by a quota system. For instance, in 2007, there were about 110 000 visas available for the manufacturing sector, including 60 000 for ethnic Koreans. In total, about 69 000 permits are available for the construction sector, 15 000 for services and about 25 000 for agriculture and fishery. Up to May 2007, almost 200 000 foreign workers had benefited from the EPS. Of these, 45% were in the general category and 55% concerned ethnic Koreans (almost exclusively Chinese nationals with an ethnic Korean background).

Recruitment under the EPS is limited to a number of countries identified by the Korean government. When the EPS started, this concerned eight countries. The range of sending countries has been expanded steadily to include fifteen countries as of August 2007. Among the foreign workers who do not have an ethnic Korean background, Vietnamese comprise the biggest group, followed by the Philippines, Thailand, Mongolia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Korea has signed bilateral agreements with all of these countries.

The regular employment permit scheme is administered under the Ministry of Labour, whereas the scheme for ethnic Koreans is administered by the Ministry of Justice.

At the end of December 2006, there were about 212 000 overstayers in Korea, a slight increase over the previous year. Overstayers account for about 23% of the foreign population.

For further information...

<http://english.molab.go.kr>

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 | .. | 3.9 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 3.9 | 4.5 | 314.7 | | | |
| Outflows | .. | 1.9 | 5.5 | 3.8 | .. | 3.4 | 183.0 | | | |
| Migration inflows (foreigners) by type Permit based statistics (standardised) | Thousands | | % distribution | | Inflows of top 10 nationalities 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 | | | | | | |
| | | | | 2000-2006 | | | | | | |
| <i>Thousands</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| International students | .. | 25.6 | 36.0 | 23.2 | | | | | | |
| Trainees | .. | 51.6 | 64.7 | 55.4 | | | | | | |
| Working holiday makers | 0.3 | 1.1 | .. | 0.8 | | | | | | |
| Seasonal workers | .. | .. | .. | .. | | | | | | |
| Intra-company transfers | 10.0 | 8.4 | 8.1 | 8.7 | | | | | | |
| Other temporary workers | .. | 11.9 | 12.5 | 10.0 | | | | | | |
| Inflows of asylum seekers | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2006 | Average | | Level ('000) | | | |
| | | | | | 1995-2000 | 2001-2006 | 2006 | | | |
| <i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| | .. | - | - | - | - | - | 0.3 | | | |

Macroeconomic, demographic and labour market indicators

| Macroeconomic indicators | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2006 | Average | | Level |
|--|------|------|------|------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| | | | | | 1995-2000 | 2001-2006 | 2006 |
| Real GDP (growth, %) | 9.2 | 8.5 | 4.2 | 5.0 | 4.4 | 4.8 | |
| GDP/capita (growth, %) – level in US Dollars | 8.1 | 7.6 | 4.0 | 4.6 | 3.5 | 4.4 | 20 993 |
| Employment (growth, %) – level in thousands | 2.9 | 4.3 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 1.4 | 23 151 |
| Unemployment (% of labour force) | 2.1 | 4.4 | 3.7 | 3.5 | 4.1 | 3.6 | |
| Components of population growth | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2006 | Average | | Level ('000) |
| | | | | | 1995-2000 | 2001-2006 | |
| <i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i> | | | | | | | |
| Total | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | |
| Natural increase | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | |
| Net migration | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | |
| Total population | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2006 | Average | | Level ('000) |
| | | | | | 1995-2000 | 2001-2006 | 2006 |
| <i>(Annual growth %)</i> | | | | | | | |
| Native-born | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Foreign-born | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| National | 1.0 | 0.8 | 0.2 | - | 0.8 | 0.2 | 47 637 |
| Foreign | 29.6 | 24.4 | 3.9 | 29.4 | 13.8 | 23.5 | 661 |
| Naturalisations | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2006 | Average | | Level |
| | | | | | 1995-2000 | 2001-2006 | 2006 |
| <i>As a percentage of foreign population</i> | | | | | | | |
| | .. | .. | 3.5 | 1.6 | .. | 2.2 | 8 125 |

Notes and sources are at the beginning of the Chapter.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/434247808522>