

Hungary

Hungary is not a major destination for international migrants, but a country rather affected by transition movements from east to west. The stock of foreign nationals is comparably small and makes up only 2% of the overall population. It is estimated that up to 40% of these are ethnic Hungarians who entered Hungary from neighbouring countries.

In 2008, long-term migration to Hungary (as defined by residence of at least one year) reached the highest level since 1991, peaking at 35 500. In 2009, it declined sharply to 25 600. This development is to be seen in the context of the economic crisis, which hit Hungary hard. Outflows have increased continuously since 2001, culminating at 5 600 in 2009. Net long-term migration thus amounted to about 20 000, a decrease of 36% compared to 2008.

Romania has been, by far, the most important country of origin over the past decade, although its share in long-term inflows declined from 50% in 2001/2002 to 28% in 2009. At the same time, the share of nationals from the EU-15 rose from less than 10% during the first half of the decade, to almost 20% in 2009. After Romania, the other main countries of origin for long-term migration were Germany, Ukraine and China.

As a consequence of the economic downturn and the associated tightening of the labour market, only some 28 200 work permits were issued in 2009, 34% less than in 2008 and almost 50% less than in 2007. Likewise, the number of residence permits issued for the purpose of “gainful employment” decreased by 20% to roughly 14 000. Family migrants obtained 4 300 permits, 11% less than in the previous year. In contrast, the number of permits for students rose by 13% to about 9 800. Since January 2009, citizens of the EEA (including Romania and Bulgaria) and their family members have full access to the Hungarian labour market.

In 2009, Hungary recorded 4 700 requests for asylum, an increase of 50% compared with the previous year. This was mainly due to a sharp rise in the number of asylum seekers from Afghanistan who filed 1 200 applications that year, a ten-fold increase over 2008. Kosovo was the single most important country of origin with 1 800 applications. Preliminary data for 2010 indicate a significant decline in the number of asylum seekers. By the end of October 2010, the UNHCR registered some 47% fewer claims for asylum than during the same period in 2009.

The Government decided to establish a pilot project for humanitarian resettlement, financed with resources from the European Refugee Fund. Furthermore, a programme to provide social and educational assistance to refugees aged 6 to 14 was introduced, to facilitate their integration into the Hungarian educational system. About 6 000 persons were apprehended for attempted or actual illegal border crossing at the borders with Ukraine, Serbia and Romania in 2009. Irregular migrants mainly came from Eastern and South Eastern Europe, as well as from Afghanistan, China, Viet Nam and Mongolia. The majority enters Hungary in their transit to Western Europe. Until 2013, Hungary will strive to enforce the protection of its external borders with the help of the EU’s External Borders Fund.

About 5 800 foreign nationals acquired Hungarian citizenship in 2009, a decrease of 30% over 2008. Nearly 90% of the new citizens came from neighbouring countries, in particular from Romania (66%), followed by Serbia and Montenegro (12%) and Ukraine (10%). In May 2010, the Hungarian National Assembly approved an amendment to the Hungarian citizenship law that introduced a simplified and preferential naturalisation procedure for persons of Hungarian descent. To be considered, applicants need to demonstrate Hungarian ancestry and language proficiency, as well as a lack of a criminal record. Residence in Hungary is not a requirement any more. However, the voting right and the Hungarian passport are subject to separate procedures. The amendment came into effect in January 2011.

In April 2009, Hungary made a step forward towards a more comprehensive migration policy when the government adopted the “Strategy of the Co-operation in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice of the Republic of Hungary”. This strategy represents the official guidelines for the development of migration, asylum and integration policy for the next five years, and stipulates policy goals in a number of migration-related areas.

For further information:

<http://portal.ksh.hu>

www.bmbah.hu/

<http://mfa.gov.hu/kum/en/bal>

<https://magyarorszag.hu/>

Recent trends in migrants' flows and stocks

HUNGARY

Migration flows (foreigners) National definition	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
Inflows	2.0	2.5	3.5	2.6	2.0	2.6	25.6
Outflows	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.4	5.6
Migration inflows (foreigners) by type	Thousands			% distribution		Inflows of top 10 nationalities as a % of total inflows of foreigners	
Permit based statistics (standardised)	2008	2009	2008	2009			
Work	..	..	..	..
Family (incl. accompanying family)	..	..	..	..
Humanitarian	..	..	..	..
Free movements	..	..	..	..
Others	..	..	..	..
Total	..	..	..	..
Temporary migration	2005	2008	2009	Average 2005-09			
<i>Thousands</i>							
International students	..	..	..	..
Trainees	..	..	..	..
Working holiday makers	..	..	..	..
Seasonal workers	..	..	..	..
Intra-company transfers	..	..	..	..
Other temporary workers	..	..	..	..
Inflows of asylum seekers	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.3	4 672
Components of population growth	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
Total	-2.2	-2.2	-1.4	-1.8	-2.4	-1.7	-18
Natural increase	-3.7	-3.9	-3.1	-3.4	-3.7	-3.4	-34
Net migration	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.7	16
Stocks of immigrants	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)
<i>Percentage of the total population</i>							
Foreign-born population	2.9	3.3	3.9	4.1	3.0	3.7	407
Foreign population	1.1	1.5	1.8	2.0	1.2	1.7	198
Naturalisations	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level
<i>Percentage of the foreign population</i>							
	6.9	6.4	4.4	2.9	5.0	4.5	5 782
Labour market outcomes	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		
<i>Employment/population ratio</i>							
Native-born men	62.6	63.0	62.8	60.9	62.9	62.8	
Foreign-born men	69.4	72.3	72.9	74.0	71.4	73.1	
Native-born women	49.4	50.9	50.4	49.7	50.0	50.6	
Foreign-born women	49.8	54.3	58.3	59.2	48.9	55.9	
<i>Unemployment rate</i>							
Native-born men	7.3	7.1	7.7	10.4	6.4	7.9	
Foreign-born men	3.5	3.0	6.3	8.6	2.5	4.9	
Native-born women	5.8	7.4	8.1	9.8	5.4	8.2	
Foreign-born women	4.8	6.4	5.9	9.6	6.2	7.7	
Macroeconomic indicators	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level
<i>Annual growth in %</i>							
Real GDP	4.9	3.2	0.8	-6.7	4.3	0.3	
GDP/capita (level in USD)	5.2	3.4	1.0	-6.5	4.5	0.5	14 717
Employment (level in thousands)	1.6	0.0	-1.2	-2.3	0.6	-0.5	3 754
<i>Percentage of the labour force</i>							
Unemployment	6.5	7.3	7.9	10.1	6.0	8.1	

Notes and sources are at the end of the chapter.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932441344>