

Ireland

Migration to Ireland has been particularly hard hit by the severe economic crisis touching the country. Between 2007 and 2010, net migration fell from 1.6% to -0.8% of total population. Irish employment and immigration levels reached peaks at the last trimester of 2007. Two years later, the country had lost 253 000 jobs, a decline of 12%. As a result, migrant inflows to Ireland decreased sharply from 110 000 in the year to April 2007 (FY 2007) to 31 000 in FY 2010.

Inflows from non-EEA countries have dropped steadily since 2004. The modest decline, from 25 000 in FY 2003 to 21 000 in FY 2007, reflected Irish policy of seeking labour market needs from within the enlarged European union. The subsequent decline, to less than 5 000 in FY 2010, reflects the unfavourable labour market conditions. The decline in inflows was even more pronounced among nationals from the eight countries from Central and Eastern Europe which entered the European Union in 2004 (EU-8). Their numbers fell from 53 000 in FY 2007 to less than 6 000 in FY 2010.

While inward migration came back to the low levels of the early 1990s, outward migration has increased to over 65 000 in both FY 2009 and 2010, leading to a net outward migration of 7 800 in FY 2009 and 34 500 in FY 2010. It mainly concerned citizens of the EU8 (30 100 emigrants) in FY 2009. For 2010, in contrast, estimates indicate that the main group was Irish citizens. 38% of all jobs lost in Ireland between 2007 and 2010 concerned citizens from the EU8. Their unemployment rate was the highest (20% versus 13% for the Irish nationals). Evidence shows that many of them migrated on to other destinations.

There were less than 2 000 applications for asylum in FY 2010, the lowest number since 1996. Among the factors influencing the decrease in recent years in the number of applications for asylum have been the provisions of the Immigration Act 2003 and the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 2004 that withdraw the automatic granting of citizenship based by virtue of birth on the island of Ireland. In addition, since December 2009, asylum seekers no longer have access to the Irish welfare system.

A review of student immigration started in September 2009 and reforms came into effect on 1 January 2011. The length of time a person from outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) can spend in Ireland as a student was capped to two years for language or non degree programmes or five years for the degree programmes.

In response to the difficult economic situation, the entry of new migrant workers from countries outside of the EEA was made more difficult. Since 1 June 2009, work permits for jobs paying less than EUR 30 000 per annum are only granted in “exceptional” cases and will no longer be issued for domestic workers and truck drivers. The labour market test was extended to eight weeks and now also applies to renewals and to spouses and dependants of an immigrant employee (except green card holders and researchers), these are required to apply for an employment permit in their own right according to standard eligibility criteria. Since January 2010, nationals of Mauritius, the country of origin of a substantial number of non-EEA immigrants, are required to have an entry visa before coming to Ireland.

Since July 2009, there is a fee of EUR 500 on the initial granting of long-term residency permission to a non-EEA national. Concerning immigrants who are already in Ireland, renewal fees for work permits increased by 50%.

In August 2009, several measures were taken that facilitate migrants’ stay and economic activity. Those who stayed and worked legally in Ireland for at least five consecutive years continuously, and holders of green cards which were due to expire no longer require a work permit. The permission is for one year and can be renewed, but the holders of the permit are expected to work and support themselves. The time to seek alternative employment for unemployed work permit holders was expended from three to six months, and the labour market test no longer applies to them. 185 applications were received by the “Undocumented Workers” Scheme that allowed workers in the last quarter of 2009 who had become undocumented through “no fault of their own” to obtain a temporary immigration permission of four months within which they could seek legitimate employment or obtain an employment permit if they were already employed. The measure thus only concerned a small part of the estimated 30 000 undocumented migrants living in Ireland at that time.

For further information:

www.inis.gov.ie

www.entemp.ie/labour/workpermits

www.ria.gov.ie

Recent trends in migrants' flows and stocks

IRELAND

Migration flows (foreigners) <i>National definition</i>	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
Inflows	7.3	16.0	15.3	8.7	9.4	16.3	38.9
Outflows	..	..	7.2	10.5	..	..	46.7
Migration inflows (foreigners) by type	Thousands		% distribution				
<i>Permit based statistics (standardised)</i>	2008	2009	2008	2009			
Work	6.0	3.1	8.9	7.9			
Family (incl. accompanying family)	11.7	10.4	17.3	23.1			
Humanitarian	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.9			
Free movements	49.3	26.5	72.9	68.1			
Others	..	..	..	..
Total	67.6	38.9	100.0	100.0			
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
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
	2.9	1.0	0.9	0.6	2.3	0.9	2 689
Components of population growth	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
Total	14.5	23.9	..	..	16.8	..	..
Natural increase	6.1	8.1	..	..	7.5	..	..
Net migration	8.4	15.9	..	..	9.2	..	..
Stocks of immigrants	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Percentage of the total population</i>							
Foreign-born population	8.7	12.6	16.7	17.2	10.0	15.3	767
Foreign population	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Naturalisations	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Percentage of the foreign population</i>							
	..	..	..	..	..	..	4 594
Labour market outcomes	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		
					2000-04	2005-09	
<i>Employment/population ratio</i>							
Native-born men	75.8	75.8	74.6	66.0	75.4	73.9	
Foreign-born men	75.2	78.8	79.5	67.7	74.9	77.8	
Native-born women	53.1	58.0	60.0	57.6	54.7	58.8	
Foreign-born women	54.9	57.7	62.5	56.1	55.0	59.9	
<i>Unemployment rate</i>							
Native-born men	4.4	4.5	6.2	14.4	4.5	6.8	
Foreign-born men	5.4	6.0	7.1	18.2	5.8	8.6	
Native-born women	4.1	3.5	3.4	7.2	3.8	4.4	
Foreign-born women	6.1	6.0	6.5	11.7	5.4	7.2	
Macroeconomic indicators	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Annual growth in %</i>							
Real GDP	9.7	6.0	-3.5	-7.6	6.2	1.2	
GDP/capita (level in USD)	8.3	3.7	-5.2	-8.1	4.5	-0.8	31 593
Employment (level in thousands)	4.8	4.7	-0.7	-8.8	2.9	0.7	1 917
<i>Percentage of the labour force</i>							
Unemployment	4.3	4.3	6.0	11.7	4.4	6.2	

Notes and sources are at the end of the chapter.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932441363>